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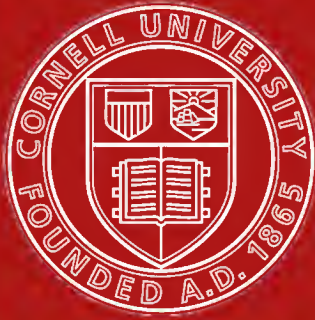








The University Press Shakespeare



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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
IN FORTY VOLUMES

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**Editor's Autograph Edition**

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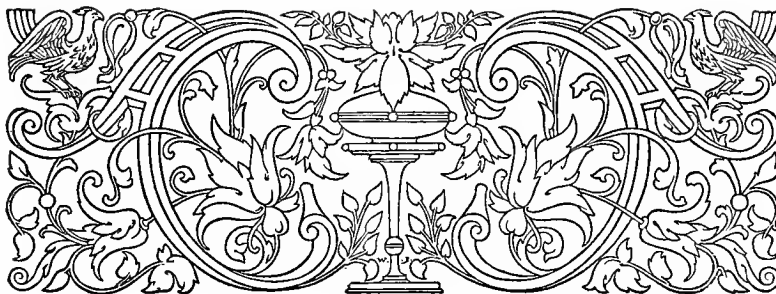
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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME XII

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MEASURE FOR MEASURE

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW J. GEORGE  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY MELTON FISHER



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NEW YORK GEORGE D. SPROUL MCMVII

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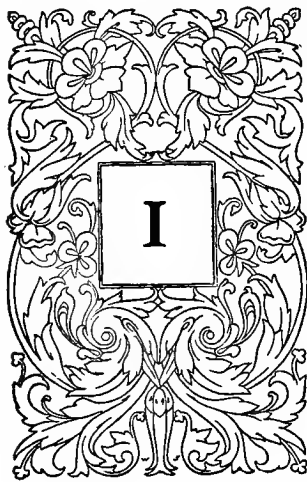
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## INTRODUCTION



IN the study of great movements in the history of our literature we should observe certain principles. We should not attempt to place rigid boundaries to these movements; we should view literature as an organic whole, — the revelation of the complex life which created it. As the soil, atmosphere, and general environment determine the growth of the plant and the character of its fruit, so every experience through which a nation passes modifies its literature and its art.

Every literature has its formative period, — a period in which its soil is being prepared through a variety of experiences. England produced a soil for the reception of that many-sided and complex awakening of the human spirit, the Renaissance, — that movement of childlike wonder, curiosity, and abounding enthusiasm,

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— in a long period of unconscious preparation. She experienced the following modifying influences: contact with the Romans in war, the refining element which came with the introduction of Christianity, the establishment of the schools of Cædmon at Whitby and of Alfred at Winchester, the destruction wrought by the inroads of the Danes, the removal of anarchy by the Normans, and the splendid energy of the native tongue as it broke forth in the full-throated ease of Chaucer. During the sixteenth century, art, philosophy, poetry, history, romance, and religious idealism flourished under the magic of More, Raleigh, and Sidney, Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare,—all children of the Renaissance.

If we are to understand the mind and art of the greatest of these, — Shakespeare, — we must know first, the origin and nature of the Renaissance in Europe; second, how it reached England, and through what channels its influence spread; and, third, how this spirit found expression in the drama which grew, put forth its blossom, and bore abundant fruit under the influence of Shakespeare and his companions.

The régime of the Middle Ages — with its contempt of human loves and human sorrows; its relinquishment of things of sense for a vision of Paradise; its belief that the earth was in the power of Satan, and that the only escape was in the mystic joys of asceticism, with its reaction in a life of mere physical pleasure, shallow skepticism, and mocking irony — was at an end, and in its place came that new spirit of intellectual and

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spiritual delight in the newly discovered world and the newly created man.

A preparatory stage to this new impulse of the Renaissance is to be found in the awakening of the mind of Europe by the discussions of the Schoolmen; the rise of schools and universities in Italy, France, and England; the wealth of scientific lore brought to light by Arabian scholars; the expansion of ideas through the Crusades; and the rise of modern language and literature with its wealth of song and romance.

There were other causes which prepared the way for the Renaissance. The study of Roman law in the city republics of Italy led naturally to the study of the Latin poets. Under Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, Italian scholars were conducted to the fountain-head of Humanism — the Greek and Latin classics. The search for old manuscripts began; monasteries, libraries, and cathedrals were visited by these pious pilgrims, and great was their transport when they discovered some dusty and begrimed scrap of a Greek or Latin author.

This outburst of enthusiasm, this revolution in human tastes and sympathies which was to leave no province of human intelligence and action untouched, was augmented by the downfall of Constantinople in 1453. Scholars fled from the ruins of the Empire to Western Europe, carrying with them the precious manuscripts of the old masters, and so the torch of learning was lighted anew in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and England. The exiles became leaders in the schools and universities of the West, and the young world spoke in

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the language of genius and power. It was the beginning of the grand age of Europe, the most significant epoch of the human mind. The cities of Italy vied with each other in their passion for the new ideas, but Florence, under the splendid patronage of the Medici, surpassed them all. Michael Angelo, her greatest son, is the typical Renaissance spirit. He was the embodiment of the soul of this glorious city, in the creation of which poet, architect, sculptor, and painter united in love and holy passion to reveal

“The truth of man, as by God first spoken.”

The reaction from the life of the Middle Ages which manifested itself in the unbounded energy and enthusiasm of the English people under the reign of the Tudors produced conditions which fostered the ideas of the Renaissance. The expansion of commercial enterprise, by which English merchants traversed all seas and visited all lands, stimulated the adventures of Raleigh, Drake, and Frobisher, by which the imagination was dazzled with visions of wealth, power, and extended influence. The growth of religious ideals through the Reformation enabled the English people to win a measure of political and intellectual freedom. The new impulse in literary and educational activity through the printing press, and the founding of schools and colleges, enabled England to become a leader in thought. The enrichment of social life through the Court of Elizabeth, and the recognition of the unity of the people in the plays, pageants, and progresses, prepared the

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way for the English character to impress itself upon the world at large.

The impulse of the Renaissance reached England through a variety of channels, and produced a result in harmony with the nature of the age and the people. Literature in England was at its lowest stage, and as the interests of the people were largely practical, political, and commercial, the literary effect of the Renaissance was not so immediately felt as it had been in France. England's intercourse with Italy up to this time had been chiefly commercial, and as her merchants returned and told the story of the new life of art and letters, curiosity was aroused in the minds of the young nobles to visit the new centres of activity, and so the first contact of England with the Renaissance was brought about. These young enthusiasts absorbed new ideas of the world and of man, listened to the romantic tales, and came under the spell of the new life to such an extent that there was danger of their despising their native tongue and their native manners. The enthusiasm became so great that English scholars sought out the new teachers. Grocyn and Linacre, representing literary and scientific enthusiasm respectively, the one studied under the Greek exile Chalcondylas, and the other under the Florentine Politian, and returning they became the leaders of the New Learning in England. Colet and Erasmus, their pupils, became the leaders in turn of the new religious and educational movements in the general awakening of national life. At the same time scholars from Italy, attracted by the advantages offered in the

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new schools and colleges of England, became teachers of the New Humanism.

The final stage in the progress of the New Learning was found at Court. Through the traveller and the scholar the spirit of the Renaissance had been introduced into England and had found a congenial home there. It only remained for the Court of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, through the atmosphere of chivalry and romance, to give it national significance. From Wyatt to Shakespeare the union of university scholarship, in which the spirit of the Greek and Latin classics prevailed, and the refinements which came from sojourn on the continent and association with its new language and literature, were united in that outburst of national enthusiasm for things English which surrounded the Court. Court manners, Court dialect, Court romance, Court allegory, and Court drama flourished in the Merrie England of Elizabeth and received their chief influence from the Queen.

The most complex, the richest and most national, of the varieties of English literature is the drama. Originating in the church, and passing from the Miracle Play to the Morality in the hands of the Guilds and travelling players, thence into the Interlude, Comedy, and Tragedy at the Court, its evolution is steady and direct until at last it finds a home in the theatre, where it reaches the proportions of a national institution and appeals to the people. That the play became the thing for this town life is attested by the fact that eighteen theatres and fifty dramatists flourished in the age of Elizabeth. But it



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should be noticed that in becoming thus popular it ceased to be considered literature; it was merely playing. This accounts for the fact that even a Shakespeare cared neither for printing nor editing his plays, while he carefully corrected the proofs of his two narrative poems. His recognition as a dramatist was first popular, later courtly.

The chief sources of the material for the drama in the time of Shakespeare were translations from the Greek and Latin classics which came from the universities, the chronicles of England and Scotland, and the collections, translations, and imitations of French, Spanish, and Italian tales with which the shops abounded. If one will review the sources of Shakespeare's plots, one will find that more than one-third of them are taken, directly or indirectly, from these old tales.

"Measure for Measure" reveals Shakespeare's familiarity with the old Italian tales, translations, and adaptations, for the ground-work of the plot is to be found in a collection of novels by Giraldi Cinthio, known as the "Hecatommithi," or Hundred Tales, published in 1565. Cinthio also dramatised the story in his "Epitia." George Whetstone, an English aspirant for dramatic fame, had twice translated and adapted Cinthio's romance; once in a double play of "Promos and Cassandra" in 1578, and again in his collection of prose tales "Heptameron of Civil Discourses," in 1582. Shakespeare evidently knew all of these works, although Cinthio's play was not translated into English, for his leading character, Angelo, is, in name at least, suggested by Angela of

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the play; but he followed Whetstone's play in many details. The society of the city in which Shakespeare lays the scene of his play is the same in character as that of Whetstone; but the leading characters are as far removed from his as art is from the commonplace. The works both of Cinthio and Whetstone are sordid in nature and crude in form; neither has any redeeming feature, as both sacrifice the heroine's chastity to redeem her brother from death. Shakespeare lifted the play out of the depths of cruelty and dishonour by a master movement of artistic ingenuity when he caused Isabella to maintain her dignity and chastity in spite of temptation from every side. Again, by diverting the plot of the old play at a critical juncture in creating the character of Mariana, he was able to save Isabella from humiliation, while at the same time he yielded a motive for the strange conduct of the Duke, and produced Angelo's pardon. Here as everywhere Shakespeare is true to his ideal of art in that he never preaches, but sets pity, honour, and chastity over against cruelty, baseness, and lust.

"Measure for Measure" undoubtedly belongs to the year 1604, the second in the reign of King James; it was probably presented at Whitehall, as "Othello" assuredly was, late in the same year. There is only one bit of reliable external evidence as to date of composition. This is to be found in a poem of William Barkstead, published in 1607, entitled "Myrrha, the Mother of Adonis." This poem contains the following passage reminiscent of that in "Measure for Measure," II, iv, 24-27:

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“ And like as when some sudden extasie  
Seizeth the nature of a sicklie man ;  
When he 's discerned to swoon, straight by and by  
Folke to his helpe confusedly have ran ;  
And seeking with their art to fetch him backe,  
So many throng, that he the ayre doth lacke.”

But there are probable internal evidences in the allusions to James's dislike of being gazed upon by crowds, notwithstanding his profession of love of the people, in Act I, Sc. i, 67-72, where the Duke says:

“ I love the people,  
But do not like to stage me to their eyes :  
Though it do well, I do not relish well  
Their loud applause and Aves vehement ;  
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion  
That does affect it.”

In Act II, Sc. iv, 26-30, Angelo says:

“ The general subject to a well-wish'd king  
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness  
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love  
Must needs appear offence.”

The propriety of the above allusions becomes more apparent when we remember that soon after his accession, in 1603, James showed special favour to Shakespeare, and others of the Lord Chamberlain's servants playing at the Globe, by granting them license “ freely to use and exercise the arte and facultie of playing . . . as well for the recreation of our loving subjectes as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to see

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them during our pleasure." Of the nine actors so honoured, Shakespeare's name stands second and Burbadge's third. They were thenceforth known as the King's Servants, and frequently played in James's presence.

Notwithstanding the play is a product of the maturity of Shakespeare's genius, it has not succeeded in becoming a favourite with the general reader. Various reasons have been assigned for this; the first being that the subject-matter is repellent to modern taste; and the second, that the poet has presented puritanical severity and the vices contrasted with it in too glaring colours for the purposes of art. The third and most plausible reason has been given by Hazlitt. He says: "Shakespeare was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations." Professor Raleigh adds significantly: "This is indeed the everlasting difficulty of Shakespeare criticism, that the critics are so much more moral than Shakespeare, and so much less experienced. He makes his appeal to thought, and they respond to the appeal by a display of delicate taste." Whatever the causes of this neglect may be, the fact remains that few plays so rich in the elements of language and composition, so representative of the highest artistic merit in many of its scenes, so masterly in the development of character, and so noble in moral temper, have received so little approbation.

The story out of which this play, so full of moral and

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practical wisdom, was created is of the simplest nature, and may be told in a few words.

In Vienna, where moral corruption "boils and bubbles till it o'erruns," reigns a Duke who has allowed laws against unchastity to lie in oblivion, until, fearing his power to alter the conditions, he decides to withdraw himself from the scene, and calls in his deputy Angelo to undertake the administration of justice. Angelo's somewhat puritanical morals and strict adherence to externals of conduct lead him to revive the old laws. The Duke, disguised as a friar, watches every step in the career of the new Governor, who, instead of punishing the chief offenders against morality, seeks out one Claudio, a young nobleman whose only semblance of violation of the law has been that he has become united to Juliet under the law of pre-contract, and has postponed the outward form of marriage because Juliet's dower remained in the charge of her friends whose favour had to be gained for the solemnisation of the nuptials. Claudio sends for his sister, Isabella, who is on the point of taking the veil at St. Clare, and asks her to plead for him before the magistrate. She consents, and presents her brother's cause to Angelo, who at last makes the dastardly suggestion that pardon might be granted on condition that she sacrifice her purity. The climax of the story is reached by her indignant scorning of such terms, and the discovery that Angelo himself is guilty of the crime of casting off his legally affianced Mariana because her dowry had been lost at sea; he has also soiled her good name by alleged discoveries of evil doing. Now he is

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the criminal, and the Duke pronounces his death in the place of Claudio's. Mariana pleads in his behalf, and the Duke for her sake pardons him.

The characters in the play fall naturally into three groups: one represented by the aristocratic Barnardine and his associates in Vagabondia, who make no excuses for being what they are, and have at least one good trait, that of being honestly base; a second, represented by Isabella and her friends, who make no claims for praise because they prefer to follow honour; and the third, of which Angelo is the type, who, obedient to the letter of the law, claim to be superior to ordinary mortals, while in reality they are the supreme law-breakers. These three types are still constituent parts of our latest and somewhat boastful civilisation, and it is in the contrast of these three that the moral purpose of Shakespeare's art is to be seen.

The action of the play centres in those masterly scenes where the Duke, Angelo, and Isabella are the prominent characters. By the Duke the plot is made possible, by Angelo it is developed, and by Isabella justice is rendered possible, — justice tempered by love. The motive which leads the Duke to lay aside his robes of office seems to be a mixed one, for he evidently wishes to avoid the responsibility of punishing those whom his inactivity has somewhat encouraged in their evil courses; and at the same time, being suspicious of Angelo's moral and political motives, he wishes to have an opportunity of testing them. By adopting the garb of a friar the Duke makes it possible for him to take a very active part in

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the development of the plot, for as an adviser of men's souls he gets at the heart of the mystery. He becomes a kind of unseen Providence in the play by which evil plans are led to good results. In the various interviews with Friar Thomas and with those who are in trouble, we see his humility, wisdom, and goodness at their best. Those with the friar are personal confessions; while those with the afflicted spirits, Juliet, Claudio, and Isabella and Mariana, are full of that tenderness and sympathy, that moral and meditative wisdom, which characterise the noblest wearers of the cowl. Although some have thought the Duke manifested too much the spirit of intrigue to be altogether honourable, yet the results show that he pursued the good and the true, according to the best light that was given him, and disprove the old saying that the cowl does not make a monk.

Although "Measure for Measure" lacks attractiveness of subject and situations, has less harmony of tone and consonance of parts, and fewer elements of perfection as a whole, than many of the plays, yet it is confessedly one of the best illustrations of the purpose of playing, whose end is "to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to Nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Mastery in this kind of revelation is found in the poet's development of the character of Angelo. It is evident that Angelo has been somewhat critical of the Duke for his leniency in matters of government, and has assumed that he himself possessed the qualities needed to enforce the law; as a result we

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see that he is not surprised at his promotion, when naturally the honour belonged to the wise, conservative, and statesmanlike Escalus. Thus, early in the play, Shakespeare, true to his philosophy of human character, that habit is the determining element in life, involves those forces out of which the catastrophe is to be evolved; and he does this so subtly that the hasty reader is often confused by the very method which to the careful reader becomes self-evident. By a few bold strokes he shows us how ignorant Angelo is of his own frailty; how blinded he is to his own condition. When Escalus mildly chides him for his severity toward others, and reminds him of the danger of similar crimes in himself, he answers in his self-righteousness, " 'T is one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall." Claudio sees through his pride of virtue, his love of praise for purity and integrity, and says:

"and for a name,  
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act  
Freshly on me : 't is surely for a name."

The same note is struck by the Duke when, speaking to Friar Thomas, he says:

" Lord Angelo is precise ;  
Stands at a guard with envy ; scarce confesses  
That his blood flows, or that his appetite  
Is more to bread than stone : hence shall we see,  
If power change purpose, what our seemers be."

To unmask this seeming is the purpose of the play; and in those wonderfully dramatic scenes with Isabella,



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scenes so full of power, passion, and pathos as to be unsurpassed in the whole range of the Shakespearean drama, the contrast between seeming and being, between hidden vice and open virtue, is made manifest. Angelo's true nature becomes revealed to himself, and in the depth of his degradation he cries:

“O my dread lord,  
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,  
To think I can be undiscernible,  
When I perceive your Grace, like power divine,  
Hath look'd upon my passes.”

For his threefold crime the Duke utters this judgment:

“‘ An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!  
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;  
Like doth quit like, and Measure still for Measure.”

Many wish the play had ended here in tragic dignity and justice, but the poet ruled otherwise, and by the introduction of Mariana turned justice into mercy, and revealed his own philosophy of moral government,

“We do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.”

The fundamental traits of Isabella's character are strength of intellect, depth of feeling, simplicity and purity of thought and action, passionate religious enthusiasm, intense and balanced imagination. These are the weapons she uses with matchless skill in the task she

## MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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is called from the quiet and seclusion of the cloister to perform for her suffering brother. At first she shrinks from the call and asks:

“what poor ability 's in me  
To do him good?”

but as she gradually rises to the consciousness of her great undertaking, not even the base-minded Lucio can refrain from paying her homage. He says:

“I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted ;  
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit ;  
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,  
As with a saint.”

She raises no objection against the law by which her brother suffers, but she pleads for mercy in language unsurpassed for modesty, firmness, womanly gentleness, and pity for human weakness. What a piercing thrust she gives to Angelo's pride and pretended righteousness in the following:

“How would you be,  
If He, which is the top of judgement, should  
But judge you as you are? O, think on that ;  
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,  
Like man new made.”

Nevertheless he does not yield, but sentences her brother to die on the morrow, and she says:

“O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.”

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Her indignation now bursts forth in a withering scorn of great ones of the earth who, drest in brief authority, play fantastic tricks before high heaven. By the almost supernatural power of her virgin mind and heart, "dedicate to nothing temporal," in thus appealing to the personal element in his office he confesses when alone:

" Amen:  
For I am that way going to temptation,  
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,  
With saints dost bait thy hook ! "

At the next interview he begins by talking in riddles, which at first Isabella thinks merely a means of testing her; but as her replies cause him to doubt her real intentions, he at last unblushingly reveals his villainous desires; then she bursts out in vehement passion full of immortal wisdom, beauty, and nobility:

"Most pernicious purpose! — Seeming, seeming! —  
I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for 't:  
. . . I'll tell the world aloud,  
What man thou art."

She now goes to seek her brother with this saintly soliloquy upon her lips:

"Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:  
More than our brother is our chastity."

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the character of Isabella is the fact that, notwithstanding the play is so little read, the most of what she voiced with such felicity,

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grace, and wisdom, has retained "its freshness of immortal youth," and has become almost as universal as the language itself.

Shakespeare nowhere presents so definitely as in "Measure for Measure" the central truth of Christian morality. The main theme of the play, contained in the following from Isabella, is never lost sight of:

"Alas, alas!  
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;  
And He that might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy."

Shakespeare has been blamed by Coleridge and Hazlitt because he acted consistently with this high philosophy, because he punished no one. In the presence of the Puritan justice he pleads for charity and mercy and in the presence of Bohemian callousness he asserts the claims of virtue and honour. In his godlike sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men lies the secret of his greatness as a teacher of mankind. His feelings compassed the total of humanity.

"All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,  
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow."

ANDREW J. GEORGE.

# **MEASURE FOR MEASURE**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

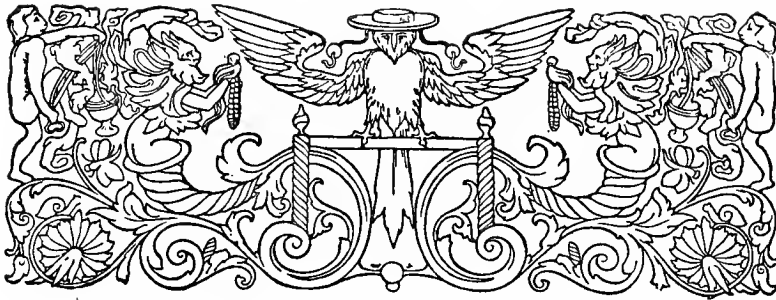
VINCENTIO, the Duke.  
ANGELO, Deputy.  
ESCALUS, an ancient Lord.  
CLAUDIO, a young gentleman.  
LUCIO, a fantastic.  
Two other gentlemen.  
PROVOST.  
THOMAS, } two friars.  
PETER, }  
A Justice.  
VARRIUS.  
ELBOW, a simple constable.  
FROTH, a foolish gentleman.  
POMPEY, servant to Mistress Overdone.  
ABHORSON, an executioner.  
BARNARDINE, a dissolute prisoner.

ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.  
MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.  
JULIET, beloved of Claudio.  
FRANCISCA, a nun.  
MISTRESS OVERDONE, a bawd.

Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants.

SCENE — *Vienna*

<sup>1</sup> This play was first printed in the First Folio. It was there divided into Acts and Scenes. At the end of the text "The Scene" was described as "Vienna," and "The Names of all the Actors" were given at length.



ACT FIRST — SCENE I  
AN APARTMENT IN THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, Lords and Attendants*

DUKE



SCALUS.

ESCAL. My lord.

DUKE. Of government the  
properties to unfold,  
Would seem in me to affect  
speech and discourse;  
Since I am put to know that  
your own science  
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all  
But that to your sufficiency . .  
advice  
My strength can give you: then  
no more remains,

..... as your worth is able,  
And let them work. The nature of our people,  
Our city's institutions, and the terms

10

<sup>4</sup> *to affect speech*] to love talk for its own sake.

<sup>5</sup> *I am put to know*] Cf. <sup>2</sup> *Hen. VI*, III, i, 43: "Had I been first *put* [*i. e.*, compelled] to speak."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

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For common justice, you're as pregnant in  
As art and practice hath enriched any  
That we remember. There is our commission,  
From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,  
I say, bid come before us Angelo. [*Exit an Attendant.*]

What figure of us think you he will bear?  
For you must know, we have with special soul  
Elected him our absence to supply;  
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,  
And given his deputation all the organs  
Of our own power: what think you of it?

20

ESCAL. If any in Vienna be of worth  
To undergo such ample grace and honour,  
It is Lord Angelo.

DUKE. Look where he comes.

*Enter ANGELO*

ANG. Always obedient to your Grace's will,  
I come to know your pleasure.

---

7-10 *then no more remains . . . work*] This is obscure, and it is usually assumed that some words have accidentally dropped out. Theobald inserted in the dotted spaces *you add Due diligence*, for which Spedding substituted *I add Commission ample*. The meaning obviously is: Nothing more remains for me to tell you except to commit my authority to your own fit knowledge, with which your moral worth is on a level, and to let the principles or properties of government work out their way.

11-12 *the terms . . . justice*] the technical language of the courts.

13 *art and practice*] Cf. *Hen. V*, I, i, 51: "art and practice part of life."

17 *figure of us*] resemblance to us.

18 *with special soul*] out of my special affection for him. Cf. *Tempest*, III, i, 44: "With so full soul."



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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DUKE. Angelo,  
There is a kind of character in thy life,  
That to th' observer doth thy history  
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings 30  
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste  
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.  
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 't were all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely  
touch'd  
But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends  
The smallest scruple of her excellence,  
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines 40  
Herself the glory of a creditor,  
Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech  
To one that can my part in him advertise;  
Hold therefore, Angelo: —  
In our remove be thou at full ourself;  
Mortality and mercy in Vienna

---

31 *thine own so proper*] so exclusively thine own property.

36-37 *Spirits . . . issues*] The soul is not endowed with nobleness, but for realising noble purposes.

39-41 *she determines . . . use*] she allots to herself the creditor's splendid advantages both of gratitude for service rendered and of interest on the loan.

42 *can . . . advertise*] can give instruction as to the part of deputy which I bestow on him. *Advertise* is accented on the second syllable.

44 *In our remove*] On our withdrawal.

45 *Mortality and mercy*] Power of capital punishment and of granting pardon.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

Live in thy tongue and heart: old Escalus,  
Though first in question, is thy secondary.  
Take thy commission.

ANG. Now, good my lord,  
Let there be some more test made of my metal,  
Before so noble and so great a figure 50  
Be stamp'd upon it.

DUKE. No more evasion:  
We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice  
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.  
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition,  
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd  
Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,  
As time and our concernings shall importune,  
How it goes with us; and do look to know  
What doth befall you here. So, fare you well:  
To the hopeful execution do I leave you 60  
Of your commissions.

ANG. Yet, give leave, my lord,  
That we may bring you something on the way.

DUKE. My haste may not admit it;  
Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do  
With any scruple; your scope is as mine own,  
So to enforce or qualify the laws  
As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand:

---

47 *Though . . . secondary*] Though he was first under consideration for  
this post, [Escalus] now thy subordinate.

52 *leaven'd*] well fermented, mature.

55 *prefers . . . unquestion'd*] takes precedence of everything else, and  
leaves undiscussed.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

I 'll privily away. I love the people,  
But do not like to stage me to their eyes:  
Though it do well, I do not relish well 70  
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;  
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion  
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ANG. The heavens give safety to your purposes!

ESCAL. Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE. I thank you. Fare you well. [*Exit.*]

ESCAL. I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave  
To have free speech with you; and it concerns me  
To look into the bottom of my place:  
A power I have, but of what strength and nature 80  
I am not yet instructed.

ANG. 'T is so with me. Let us withdraw together,  
And we may soon our satisfaction have  
Touching that point.

ESCAL. I 'll wait upon your honour. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II—A STREET

*Enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen*

LUCIO. If the Duke, with the other dukes, come not  
to composition with the King of Hungary, why then all  
the dukes fall upon the king.

---

68 *I love the people, etc.*] Shakespeare is commonly credited here with an allusion to King James I's notorious dislike of demonstrations in his honour by crowds in public places. The same sentiment is repeated II, iv, 27-30, *infra*: "The general subject . . . appear offence."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

FIRST GENT. Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary's!

SEC. GENT. Amen.

LUCIO. Thou concludest like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table.

SEC. GENT. "Thou shalt not steal"?

LUCIO. Ay, that he razed.

FIRST GENT. Why, 't was a commandment to command the captain and all the rest from their functions: they put forth to steal. There's not a soldier of us all, that, in the thanksgiving before meat, do relish the petition well that prays for peace.

SEC. GENT. I never heard any soldier dislike it.

LUCIO. I believe thee; for I think thou never wast where grace was said.

SEC. GENT. No? a dozen times at least.

FIRST GENT. What, in metre?

LUCIO. In any proportion or in any language.

FIRST GENT. I think, or in any religion.

LUCIO. Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all controversy: as, for example, thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

FIRST GENT. Well, there went but a pair of shears between us.

---

17 *dislike*] express dislike. Cf. *As You Like It*, V, iv, 66, and note.

22 *proportion*] measure.

27-28 *Well, there went . . . us*] we are of the same piece; a proverbial expression suggesting that men are all alike save for the tailor's interposition. Cf. Marston's *Malcontent*, 1604, IV, 2 (ed. Bullen, I, 290): "*There goes but a pair of shears betwixt an emperor and the son of a bagpiper.*"

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

LUCIO. I grant; as there may between the lists and the velvet. Thou art the list. 30

FIRST GENT. And thou the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou 'rt a three-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey, as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

LUCIO. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of thy speech: I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

FIRST GENT. I think I have done myself wrong, have I not? 40

SEC. GENT. Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.

LUCIO. Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to —

SEC. GENT. To what, I pray?

LUCIO. Judge.

SEC. GENT. To three thousand dolours a year.

FIRST GENT. Ay, and more.

LUCIO. A French crown more. 50

32 *three-piled*] Cf. *All 's Well*, IV, v, 88, and note.

34 *piled . . . velvet*] a quibble on "piled" in the sense of "pealed," made bald (by the French venereal disease), and "piled," richly woven (of velvet).

37 *begin thy health*] begin drinking to the recovery of thy health.

50 *A French crown*] A bald pate. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, ii, 86: "Some of your *French crowns* have no hair at all." There is a tacit allusion to the medical term, "corona veneris."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

FIRST GENT. Thou art always figuring diseases in me; but thou art full of error; I am sound.

LUCIO. Nay, not as one would say, healthy; but so sound as things that are hollow: thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.

*Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE*

FIRST GENT. How now! which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

MRS OV. Well, well; there's one yonder arrested and carried to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

SEC. GENT. Who's that, I pray thee? 60

MRS OV. Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior Claudio.

FIRST GENT. Claudio to prison? 't is not so.

MRS OV. Nay, but I know 't is so: I saw him arrested; saw him carried away; and, which is more, within these three days his head to be chopped off.

LUCIO. But, after all this fooling, I would not have it so. Art thou sure of this?

MRS OV. I am too sure of it: and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.

LUCIO. Believe me, this may be: he promised to meet <sup>70</sup> me two hours since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

SEC. GENT. Besides, you know, it draws something near to the speech we had to such a purpose.

FIRST GENT. But, most of all, agreeing with the proclamation.

LUCIO. Away! let's go learn the truth of it.

*[Exeunt Lucio and Gentlemen.]*

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

MRS OV. Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk. 80

*Enter POMPEY*

How now! what 's the news with you?

POM. Yonder man is carried to prison.

MRS OV. Well; what has he done?

POM. A woman.

MRS OV. But what 's his offence?

POM. Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MRS OV. What, is there a maid with child by him?

POM. No, but there 's a woman with maid by him.

You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

MRS OV. What proclamation, man?

POM. All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.

MRS OV. And what shall become of those in the city?

POM. They shall stand for seed: they had gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in for them.

MRS OV. But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?

POM. To the ground, mistress.

---

79 *sweat*] probably the recent epidemic of the "sweating sickness." A reference to the "sweating tub" methods of curing venereal disease would be less pertinent. Cf. "the tub," III, i, 53, *infra*, and note.

86 *peculiar*] in private ownership.

91 *All houses in the suburbs*] Disorderly houses in Elizabethan London were usually located in the districts outside the city boundaries. Cf. Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, II, 3: "The pretty *suburbians*," *i. e.*, women of the town.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

MRS OV. Why, here 's a change indeed in the com-  
monwealth! What shall become of me? 100

POM. Come; fear not you: good counsellors lack no  
clients: though you change your place, you need not  
change your trade; I'll be your tapster still. Courage!  
there will be pity taken on you: you that have worn your  
eyes almost out in the service, you will be considered.

MRS OV. What 's to do here, Thomas tapster? let 's  
withdraw.

POM. Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost  
to prison; and there 's Madam Juliet. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and Officers*

CLAUD. Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to the  
world? 110

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

PROV. I do it not in evil disposition,  
But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

CLAUD. Thus can the demigod Authority  
Make us pay down for our offence by weight  
The words of heaven; — on whom it will, it will;  
On whom it will not, so; yet still 't is just.

---

106 *Thomas tapster*] A colloquial class-name, like Tom Tinker or Tom  
Tosspot, playfully applied here to Pompey.

116–117 *The words of heaven . . . it will not, so*] This, the punctuation of  
the Folios, is clearly right. Authority can make us suffer for our  
offence precisely the retribution described in the Bible. The Scriptu-  
ral words to which “on whom it will,” etc., allude, are in two verses  
in Romans ix (v. 15): “For He saith to Moses: ‘I will have mercy  
*on whom I will* have mercy,” and (v. 18) “Therefore hath He  
mercy *on whom He will* have mercy.”



SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

*Re-enter Lucio and two Gentlemen*

LUCIO. Why, how now, Claudio! whence comes this restraint?

CLAUD. From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:  
As surfeit is the father of much fast, 120  
So every scope by the immoderate use  
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,  
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,  
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die.

LUCIO. If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors: and yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the morality of imprisonment. What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUD. What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO. What, is 't murder? 130

CLAUD. No.

LUCIO. Lechery?

CLAUD. Call it so.

PROV. Away, sir! you must go.

CLAUD. One word, good friend. Lucio, a word with you.

---

122-124 *Our natures . . . we die*] Cf. Chapman's adaptation of the same image in his *Revenge for Honour*, II, i, 113-115: ". . . men like poison'd rats, which when they've swallowed The pleasing bone, rest not until they drink, And can rest then much less until they burst with 't."

128 *morality*] Sir William D'Avenant's happy change (in his *Law for Lovers*, an adapted version of the play) for the Folio reading *mortality*.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

LUCIO. A hundred, if they 'll do you any good.  
Is lechery so look'd after?

CLAUD. Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract  
I got possession of Julietta's bed:  
You know the lady; she is fast my wife, 140  
Save that we do the denunciation lack  
Of outward order: this we came not to,  
Only for propagation of a dower  
Remaining in the coffer of her friends;  
From whom we thought it meet to hide our love  
Till time had made them for us. But it chances  
The stealth of our most mutual entertainment  
With character too gross is writ on Juliet.

LUCIO. With child, perhaps?

CLAUD. Unhappily, even so. 150  
And the new Deputy now for the Duke, —  
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,  
Or whether that the body public be  
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,  
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know  
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;

---

138 *true contract*] a genuine contract (accented on the second syllable)  
of betrothal, which preceded the marriage rites. Cf. III, i, 210, *infra*.  
The ceremony of the contract is fully described in *Tw. Night*, V, i,  
150-155.

141-143 *we do the denunciation . . . dower*] we are without the formal  
ceremony of public announcement (of our union); this we deferred  
merely to allow of some increase in the amount of the lady's dowry.

146 *Till time . . . for us*] Till time had reconciled her friends to our purpose.

151 *fault . . . newness*] inherent defect and hasty vision of one in a new  
position.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Whether the tyranny be in his place,  
 Or in his eminence that fills it up,  
 I stagger in: — but this new governor  
 Awakes me all the enrolled penalties  
 Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall 160  
 So long, that nineteen zodiacs have gone round,  
 And none of them been worn; and, for a name,  
 Now puts the drowsy and neglected act  
 Freshly on me: 't is surely for a name.

LUCIO. I warrant it is: and thy head stands so tickle  
 on thy shoulders, that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may  
 sigh it off. Send after the Duke, and appeal to him.

CLAUD. I have done so, but he's not to be found.  
 I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service: 170  
 This day my sister should the cloister enter  
 And there receive her approbation:  
 Acquaint her with the danger of my state;  
 Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends  
 To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him:  
 I have great hope in that; for in her youth  
 There is a prone and speechless dialect,

---

161 *nineteen zodiacs*] In the next scene (I, iii, 21) the Duke declares he has  
 suffered the law to be in abeyance not *nineteen*, but *fourteen* years.  
 The discrepancy may be due to the dramatist's carelessness, or it may  
 be that, although the law has been in desuetude nineteen years, the  
 Duke may have reigned no more than fourteen.

171 *receive her approbation*] enter on her term of probation, her novitiate.

176 *prone, etc.*] "Prone" seems here used in the sense of "prompt," or "apt."  
 The sentence means that youth has an aptitude to move or persuade  
 without use of words. Cf. for the thought, *Win. Tale*, II, ii, 41:  
 "The *silence* often of pure innocence *Persuades* when speaking fails."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art  
When she will play with reason and discourse,  
And well she can persuade.

179

LUCIO. I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of the like, which else would stand under grievous imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

CLAUD. I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO. Within two hours.

CLAUD. Come, officer, away!  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III—A MONASTERY

*Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS*

DUKE. No, holy father; throw away that thought;  
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love  
Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee  
To give me secret harbour, hath a purpose  
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends  
Of burning youth.

FRI. T. May your grace speak of it?

DUKE. My holy sir, none better knows than you

---

181-182 *stand under grievous imposition*] be liable to grievous penalties.

183 *tick-tack*] A loose reference to a game resembling backgammon.

2-3 *dribbling dart . . . complete bosom*] Love's weakly aimed, feebly fluttering arrow cannot pierce a completely armed, self-possessed heart.

In archery a "dribbler" means a bad marksman.

SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

How I have ever loved the life removed,  
 And held in idle price to haunt assemblies  
 Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps. 10  
 I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,  
 A man of stricture and firm abstinence,  
 My absolute power and place here in Vienna,  
 And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;  
 For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,  
 And so it is received. Now, pious sir,  
 You will demand of me why I do this.

FRI. T. Gladly, my lord.

DUKE. We have strict statutes and most biting laws,  
 The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds, 20  
 Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;  
 Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,  
 That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,  
 Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,  
 Only to stick it in their children's sight  
 For terror, not to use, in time the rod

---

20 *weeds*] This is the reading of the Folios, for which Theobald substituted *steeds*. Shakespeare was often careless with his metaphors, and the figure of the rank and noisome growths which deface a neglected garden suits the context. Cf. Iago's words in *Othello*, I, iii, 320 *seq.*: "Our *bodies are our gardens*, to the which our *wills are gardeners*."

21 *fourteen years . . . slip*] At I, ii, 161, *supra*, the laws in question are said to have been in abeyance for nineteen years (see note, *ibid*). For *let slip*, the reading of the Folios, D'Avenant (in his altered version, followed by Theobald and others) substituted *let sleep*. The change is supported by II, ii, 90, *infra*, where the law is said to have *slept*. But "let slip" in the sense of "neglect," "suffer to pass unnoticed," is often found. Cf. *Tw. Night*, III, iv, 272: "Let the matter *slip*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,  
 Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;  
 And liberty plucks justice by the nose;  
 The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart 30  
 Goes all decorum.

FRI. T.           It rested in your Grace  
 To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleased:  
 And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd  
 Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE.               I do fear, too dreadful:  
 Sith 't was my fault to give the people scope,  
 'T would be my tyranny to strike and gall them  
 For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done,  
 When evil deeds have their permissive pass,  
 And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,  
 I have on Angelo imposed the office; 40  
 Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,  
 And yet my nature never in the fight  
 To do in slander. And to behold his sway,  
 I will, as 't were a brother of your order,  
 Visit both prince and people: therefore, I prithee,  
 Supply me with the habit, and instruct me  
 How I may formally in person bear me

---

27 *Becomes*] D'Avenant's version inserted this needful word, which is missing from the Folios.

42-43 *And yet . . . slander*] This is the original reading. Pope substituted *sight* for *fight*, Theobald *so do* for *to do*, and Hanmer *it* for *in* (line 43). The meaning seems to be that the Duke's person will not figure in Angelo's war with crime, so as to incur injurious comments (either for past mildness or present sternness).

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action  
At our more leisure shall I render you;  
Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise; 50  
Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses  
That his blood flows, or that his appetite  
Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,  
If power change purpose, what our seemers be. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV—A NUNNERY

*Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA*

ISAB. And have you nuns no farther privileges?

FRAN. Are not these large enough?

ISAB. Yes, truly: I speak not as desiring more;  
But rather wishing a more strict restraint

Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

LUCIO. [*within*]. Ho! Peace be in this place!

ISAB. Who 's that which calls?

FRAN. It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,  
Turn you the key, and know his business of him;  
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn.  
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men 10  
But in the presence of the prioress:  
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face;

---

51 *Stands at a guard with envy*] Stands on his guard against, is able to defend himself against, malicious tongues.

53-54 *hence . . . be*] The Duke will discover whether the possession of power work any change in Angelo's character, whether men are really what they seem to be.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.  
He calls again; I pray you, answer him. [Exit.]

ISAB. Peace and prosperity! Who is 't that calls?

*Enter LUCIO*

LUCIO. Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses  
Proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me  
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,  
A novice of this place, and the fair sister  
To her unhappy brother Claudio? 20

ISAB. Why, "her unhappy brother"? let me ask  
The rather, for I now must make you know  
I am that Isabella and his sister.

LUCIO. Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets  
you:

Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

ISAB. Woe me! for what?

LUCIO. For that which, if myself might be his judge,  
He should receive his punishment in thanks:  
He hath got his friend with child.

ISAB. Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO. It is true. 30

I would not — though 't is my familiar sin  
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,

---

30 *make me not your story*] make me not your subject of mirth, your jest.

Cf. *M. Wives*, V, v, 154: "I am your *theme*."

32 *lapwing*] The "lapwing" or peewit often figures as the symbol of fickleness and inconstancy from its wily habits. Cf. Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, II, 329: "a *lapwing* has lost its faith And is the bird falsest of all."



SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Tongue far from heart — play with all virgins so:  
 I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted;  
 By your renouncement, an immortal spirit;  
 And to be talk'd with in sincerity,  
 As with a saint.

ISAB. You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO. Do you believe it. Fewness and truth, 't is  
 thus: —

Your brother and his lover have embraced: 40  
 As those that feed grow full, — as blossoming time,  
 That from the seedness the bare fallow brings  
 To teeming foison, — even so her plenteous womb  
 Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

ISAB. Some one with child by him? — My cousin Juliet?

LUCIO. Is she your cousin?

ISAB. Adoptedly; as school-maids change their names  
 By vain, though apt, affection.

LUCIO. She it is.

ISAB. O, let him marry her.

LUCIO. This is the point.

The duke is very strangely gone from hence; 50  
 Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,  
 In hand, and hope of action: but we do learn

---

39 *Fewness and truth*] Briefly and truly.

43-44 *womb . . . husbandry*] Cf. *Sonnet* iii, 5-6: "whose unear'd *womb*  
 Disdains the *tillage* of thy *husbandry*."

51-52 *Bore . . . action*] Deluded and raised false hopes of action. For  
 "and hope of action" editors sometimes substitute "*with*" or "*in hope*  
 of action," a construction harmonising better with the common phrase  
 "bear in hand," *i. e.*, "delude."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT I

---

By those that know the very nerves of state,  
 His givings-out were of an infinite distance  
 From his true-meant design. Upon his place,  
 And with full line of his authority,  
 Governs Lord Angelo; a man whose blood  
 Is very snow-broth; one who never feels  
 The wanton stings and motions of the sense,  
 But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge 60  
 With profits of the mind, study and fast.  
 He — to give fear to use and liberty,  
 Which have for long run by the hideous law,  
 As mice by lions — hath pick'd out an act,  
 Under whose heavy sense your brother's life  
 Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it;  
 And follows close the rigour of the statute,  
 To make him an example. All hope is gone,  
 Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer  
 To soften Angelo: and that's my pith of business 70  
 'Twixt you and your poor brother.

ISAB. Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO. Has censured him  
 Already; and, as I hear, the provost hath  
 A warrant for his execution.

ISAB. Alas! what poor ability's in me  
 To do him good?

LUCIO. Assay the power you have.

---

60 *rebate*] "Rebate" and "blunt" mean the same thing. Cf. Massinger, *Roman Actor*, IV, 2, where a foil is described as with "the point and edge *rebated*."

62 *to give fear . . . liberty*] to offer the restraint of fear to habit and license.

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

ISAB. My power? Alas, I doubt, —

LUCIO. Our doubts are traitors,  
And make us lose the good we oft might win  
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,  
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,  
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,  
All their petitions are as freely theirs  
As they themselves would owe them.

ISAB. I 'll see what I can do.

LUCIO. But speedily.

ISAB. I will about it straight;  
No longer staying but to give the Mother  
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you:  
Commend me to my brother: soon at night  
I 'll send him certain word of my success.

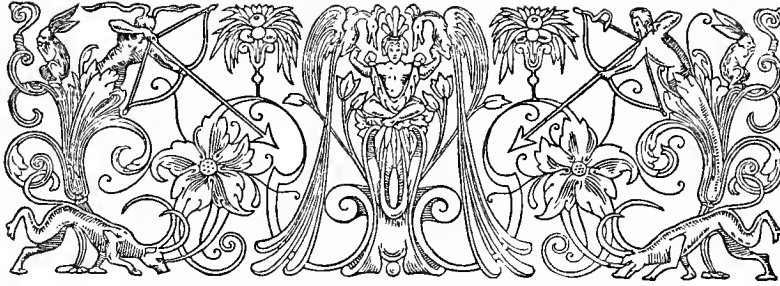
LUCIO. I take my leave of you.

ISAB. Good sir, adieu. 90

[*Exeunt.*]

---

83 *owe*] have. "Owe" is commonly used for "own," "possess."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I  
A HALL IN ANGELO'S HOUSE

*Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, and a Justice, Provost, Officers,  
and other Attendants, behind*

ANGELO



WE MUST NOT MAKE A  
scarecrow of the law,  
Setting it up to fear the birds of  
prey,

And let it keep one shape, till  
custom make it

Their perch, and not their terror.

ESCAL. Ay, but yet

Let us be keen, and rather cut a  
little,

Than fall, and bruise to death.

Alas, this gentleman,

Whom I would save, had a most  
noble father!

Let but your honour know,  
Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,

<sup>8</sup> *know*] examine, consider, take cognizance of. The word is used in the  
same sense, line 22, *infra*: "what *know* the laws," etc., *i. e.*, "What

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

That, in the working of your own affections, 10  
Had time cohered with place or place with wishing,  
Or that the resolute acting of your blood  
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,  
Whether you had not sometime in your life  
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,  
And pull'd the law upon you.

ANG. 'T is one thing to be tempted, Escalus,  
Another thing to fall. I not deny,  
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,  
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two 20  
Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,  
That justice seizes: what know the laws  
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'T is very pregnant,  
The jewel that we find, we stoop and take 't,  
Because we see it; but what we do not see  
We tread upon, and never think of it.  
You may not so extenuate his offence  
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,  
When I, that censure him, do so offend,  
Let mine own judgement pattern out my death, 30  
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.

ESCAL. Be it as your wisdom will.

ANG. Where is the provost?

PROV. Here, if it like your honour.

ANG. See that Claudio

---

cognizance can the laws take of the circumstance that thieves may possibly pass judgment on thieves?"

28 *For*] For the reason that, because.

31 *nothing come in partial*] no partiality intervene.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

Be executed by nine to-morrow morning:  
Bring him his confessor, let him be prepared;  
For that 's the utmost of his pilgrimage. [*Exit Provost.*]

ESCAL. [*Aside*] Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive  
us all!

Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall:  
Some run from brakes of ice, and answer none;  
And some condemned for a fault alone. 40

*Enter ELBOW, and Officers with FROTH and POMPEY*

ELB. Come, bring them away: if these be good people  
in a commonweal that do nothing but use their abuses in  
common houses, I know no law: bring them away.

ANG. How now, sir! What 's your name? and what 's  
the matter?

ELB. If it please your honour, I am the poor Duke's  
constable, and my name is Elbow: I do lean upon jus-  
tice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honour  
two notorious benefactors.

ANG. Benefactors? Well; what benefactors are <sup>50</sup>  
they? are they not malefactors?

ELB. If it please your honour, I know not well what

---

39 *Some run . . . none*] This is the original reading, and is not easily explained. "Brake" is variously used for "thicket," "bridle," "trap," and other forms of entanglement. "Brakes of ice" may mean "frozen ground rendered dangerous by traps of ice," and hence "danger" generally. The sentence would then mean "Some run free from dangerous situations and are not called to account." Rowe and many succeeding editors substitute *vice* for *ice*, and understand by "brakes of vice" traps or entanglements of sin, which gives the sense required by the context more obviously than the original reading.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

they are: but precise villains they are, that I am sure of; and void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have.

ESCAL. This comes off well; here 's a wise officer.

ANG. Go to: what quality are they of? Elbow is your name? why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

POM. He cannot, sir; he 's out at elbow.

ANG. What are you, sir? 60

ELB. He, sir! a tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one that serves a bad woman; whose house, sir, was, as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house, which, I think, is a very ill house too.

ESCAL. How know you that?

ELB. My wife, sir, whom I detest before heaven and your honour, —

ESCAL. How? thy wife?

ELB. Ay, sir; — whom, I thank heaven, is an honest woman, — 70

ESCAL. Dost thou detest her therefore?

ELB. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house.

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56 *This comes off well*] This is eloquently spoken.

61 *parcel-bawd*] "Parcel" for "part" is frequently used in this sort of combination. Cf. line 208, *infra*, "partly a bawd," and *2 Hen. IV*, II, i, 84, "*parcel-gilt*."

63-64 *she professes . . . hot-house*] she pretends to keep a bathing establishment.

66 *detest*] Mrs. Quickly also in *M. Wives*, I, iv, 135, blunderingly uses "detest" for "protest" or "attest."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

ESCAL. How dost thou know that, constable?

ELB. Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been a woman cardinally given, might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there.

ESCAL. By the woman's means?

ELB. Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means: but as<sup>80</sup> she spit in his face, so she defied him.

POM. Sir, if it please your honour, this is not so.

ELB. Prove it before these varlets here, thou honourable man; prove it.

ESCAL. Do you hear how he misplaces?

POM. Sir, she came in great with child; and longing, saving your honour's reverence, for stewed prunes; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish, a dish of some three-pence; your honours have seen such dishes; they are not<sup>90</sup> China dishes, but very good dishes, —

ESCAL. Go to, go to: no matter for the dish, sir.

POM. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right: but to the point. As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three-pence again.<sup>100</sup>

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87 *stewed prunes*] a dish invariably provided in brothels, according to ample testimony of Elizabethan writers.

88 *distant*] blunder for "instant."



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

FROTH. No, indeed.

POM. Very well; — you being then, if you be remembered, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes, —

FROTH. Ay, so I did indeed.

POM. Why, very well; I telling you then, if you be remembered, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you, —

FROTH. All this is true.

POM. Why, very well, then, —

110

ESCAL. Come, you are a tedious fool: to the purpose. What was done to Elbow's wife, that he hath cause to complain of? Come me to what was done to her.

POM. Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet.

ESCAL. No, sir, nor I mean it not.

POM. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honour's leave. And, I beseech you, look into Master Froth here, sir; a man of fourscore pound a year; whose father died at Hallowmas: — was 't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth? —

FROTH. All-hallond eve.

120

POM. Why, very well; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; 't was in the Bunch of Grapes, where, indeed, you have a delight to sit, have you not?

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122 *a lower chair*] a low or easy chair.

122-123 *Bunch of Grapes*] The name given to a particular room in the tavern. In *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 26, 35, mention is made of rooms in the Boar's-Head tavern termed respectively "Half-moon" and "Pomgarnet," *i. e.* Pomegranate.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

FROTH. I have so; because it is an open room, and good for winter.

POM. Why, very well, then; I hope here be truths.

ANG. This will last out a night in Russia,  
When nights are longest there: I 'll take my leave,  
And leave you to the hearing of the cause; 130  
Hoping you 'll find good cause to whip them all.

ESCAL. I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship.  
[Exit Angelo.]

Now, sir, come on: what was done to Elbow's wife, once more?

POM. Once, sir? there was nothing done to her once.

ELB. I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

POM. I beseech your honour, ask me.

ESCAL. Well, sir; what did this gentleman do to her?

POM. I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face. Good Master Froth, look upon his honour; 't is for a good purpose. Doth your honour mark his face? 142

ESCAL. Ay, sir, very well.

POM. Nay, I beseech you, mark it well.

ESCAL. Well, I do so.

POM. Doth your honour see any harm in his face?

ESCAL. Why, no.

POM. I 'll be supposed upon a book, his face is the

---

125-126 *an open room . . . winter*] Possibly a pointless remark on the part of Froth, who is described in the original *dramatis personæ* as "a foolish gentleman." An "open" room is one open either to the public or to the sun.

148 *supposed*] blunder for "deposed," *i. e.*, "sworn."

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

worst thing about him. Good, then; if his face be the worst thing about him, how could Master Froth do the constable's wife any harm? I would know that of your honour. 152

ESCAL. He 's in the right. Constable, what say you to it?

ELB. First, an it like you, the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.

POM. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.

ELB. Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicked varlet! the time is yet to come that she was ever respected with man, woman, or child. 161

POM. Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her.

ESCAL. Which is the wiser here? Justice or Iniquity? Is this true?

ELB. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her! If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor Duke's officer. Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of battery on thee. 171

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164 *Justice or Iniquity*] Constable or Pompey, the accuser or the accused. In the old morality plays, "Iniquity" was often the name formally conferred on the "Vice" or villain of the piece. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 438, "that reverend *vice*, that grey *iniquity*," and *Rich. III*, III, iv, 82, "thus like the *formal vice*, *Iniquity*."

170 *Hannibal*] Blunder for "Cannibal." Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 157, where Pistol makes the reverse error, and speaks of "Cannibals" for "Hannibals."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

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ESCAL. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you might have your action of slander too.

ELB. Marry, I thank your good worship for it. What is 't your worship's pleasure I shall do with this wicked caitiff?

ESCAL. Truly, officer, because he hath some offences in him that thou wouldst discover if thou couldst, let him continue in his courses till thou knowest what they are.

ELB. Marry, I thank your worship for it. Thou seest, thou wicked varlet, now, what 's come upon thee: thou art to continue now, thou varlet; thou art to continue. 182

ESCAL. Where were you born, friend?

FROTH. Here in Vienna, sir.

ESCAL. Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

FROTH. Yes, an 't please you, sir.

ESCAL. So. What trade are you of, sir?

POM. A tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

ESCAL. Your mistress' name?

POM. Mistress Overdone. 190

ESCAL. Hath she had any more than one husband?

POM. Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

ESCAL. Nine! Come hither to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: they will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.

FROTH. I thank your worship. For mine own part,

---

195 *they will draw you . . . hang*] A quibble on varied senses of "draw," *i. e.*, "draw ale," "drain or empty a glass," and "draw a convict to and from the scaffold on the hurdle." Cf. "drawn in," line 199. "Hang" means here "cause to be hanged," "be the means of hanging (them)."

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

I never come into any room in a taphouse, but I am drawn in. 199

ESCAL. Well, no more of it, Master Froth: farewell. [*Exit Froth.*] Come you hither to me, Master tapster. What 's your name, Master tapster?

POM. Pompey.

ESCAL. What else?

POM. Bum, sir.

ESCAL. Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that, in the beastliest sense, you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you colour it in being a tapster, are you not? come, tell me true: it shall be the better for you. 210

POM. Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live.

ESCAL. How would you live, Pompey? by being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? is it a lawful trade?

POM. If the law would allow it, sir.

ESCAL. But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be allowed in Vienna.

POM. Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?

ESCAL. No, Pompey. 220

POM. Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to 't, then. If your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

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206 *the greatest thing*] A jesting allusion to the enormously wide and unsightly trunk-hose worn by Elizabethan gentlemen.

222 *take order . . . drabs*] take measures for dealing with the loose women.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

ESCAL. There are pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: it is but heading and hanging.

POM. If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year together, you 'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads: if this law hold in Vienna ten year, I 'll rent the fairest house in it after three-pence a bay: if you live to see this come to pass, say Pompey told you so. <sup>231</sup>

ESCAL. Thank you, good Pompey; and, in requital of your prophecy, hark you: I advise you, let me not find you before me again upon any complaint whatsoever; no, not for dwelling where you do: if I do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd Cæsar to you; in plain dealing, Pompey, I shall have you whipt: so, for this time, Pompey, fare you well.

POM. I thank your worship for your good counsel: [*Aside*] but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine. <sup>241</sup>

Whip me? No, no; let carman whip his jade:  
The valiant heart 's not whipt out of his trade. [*Exit.*]

ESCAL. Come hither to me, Master Elbow; come hither, Master constable. How long have you been in this place of constable?

ELB. Seven year and a half, sir.

---

229-230 *three-pence a bay*] A "bay" seems to have been a recognised standard in the measurement of houses, each bay being about twenty feet in length. Rowe's substitution of *day* for *bay* is needless. In Hall's *Satires*, Lib. IV, a silly "cote," *i. e.*, "cot," is described as of "one bay's breadth." "After" here means "at the rate of."

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

ESCAL. I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had continued in it some time. You say, seven years together? 250

ELB. And a half, sir.

ESCAL. Alas, it hath been great pains to you. They do you wrong to put you so oft upon 't: are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it?

ELB. Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters: as they are chosen, they are glad to choose me for them; I do it for some piece of money, and go through with all.

ESCAL. Look you bring me in the names of some six or seven, the most sufficient of your parish.

ELB. To your worship's house, sir? 260

ESCAL. To my house. Fare you well. [*Exit Elbow.*]  
What 's o'clock, think you?

JUST. Eleven, sir.

ESCAL. I pray you home to dinner with me.

JUST. I humbly thank you.

ESCAL. It grieves me for the death of Claudio;  
But there 's no remedy.

JUST. Lord Angelo is severe.

ESCAL. It is but needful:

Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so;

Pardon is still the nurse of second woe: 270

But yet, — poor Claudio! There is no remedy.

Come, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

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248 *your readiness*] Pope's emendation of the original reading *the readiness*.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

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SCENE II—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE SAME

*Enter PROVOST and a Servant*

SERV. He 's hearing of a cause; he will come straight:  
I 'll tell him of you.

PROV. Pray you do. [*Exit Servant.*] I 'll know  
His pleasure; may be he will relent. Alas,  
He hath but as offended in a dream!  
All sects, all ages smack of this vice; and he  
To die for 't!

*Enter ANGELO*

ANG. Now, what 's the matter, provost?

PROV. Is it your will Claudio shall die to-morrow?

ANG. Did not I tell thee yea? hadst thou not order?  
Why dost thou ask again?

PROV. Lest I might be too rash:  
Under your good correction, I have seen, 10  
When, after execution, Judgement hath  
Repented o'er his doom.

ANG. Go to; let that be mine:  
Do you your office, or give up your place,  
And you shall well be spared.

PROV. I crave your honour's pardon.  
What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet?  
She 's very near her hour.

ANG. Dispose of her  
To some more fitter place, and that with speed.

[ 36 ]



SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

*Re-enter Servant*

SERV. Here is the sister of the man condemn'd  
Desires access to you.

ANG. Hath he a sister?

PROV. Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous maid, 20  
And to be shortly of a sisterhood,  
If not already.

ANG. Well, let her be admitted. [*Exit Servant.*]  
See you the fornicatress be removed:  
Let her have needful, but not lavish, means;  
There shall be order for 't.

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCIO*

PROV. God save your honour!

ANG. Stay a little while. [*To Isab.*] You 're welcome:  
what 's your will?

ISAB. I am a woeful suitor to your honour,  
Please but your honour hear me.

ANG. Well; what 's your suit?

ISAB. There is a vice that most I do abhor, 30  
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;  
For which I would not plead, but that I must;  
For which I must not plead, but that I am  
At war 'twixt will and will not.

ANG. Well; the matter?

ISAB. I have a brother is condemn'd to die:  
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,  
And not my brother.

PROV. [*Aside*] Heaven give thee moving graces!

[ 37 ]

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

ANG. Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it?  
Why, every fault 's condemn'd ere it be done:  
Mine were the very cipher of a function,  
To fine the faults whose fine stands in record, 40  
And let go by the actor.

ISAB. O just but severe law!  
I had a brother, then. — Heaven keep your honour!

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] Give 't not o'er so: to him  
again, entreat him;

Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown:  
You are too cold; if you should need a pin,  
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it:  
To him, I say!

ISAB. Must he needs die?

ANG. Maiden, no remedy.

ISAB. Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,  
And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy. 50

ANG. I will not do 't.

ISAB. But can you, if you would?

ANG. Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.

ISAB. But might you do 't, and do the world no wrong,  
If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse  
As mine is to him?

ANG. He 's sentenced; 't is too late.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] You are too cold.

ISAB. Too late? why, no; I, that do speak a word,  
May call it back again. Well, believe this,  
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,

---

40 *To fine . . . record*] To adjudge punishment for the fault, penalty for which is duly prescribed.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, 60  
 The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,  
 Become them with one half so good a grace  
 As mercy does.

If he had been as you, and you as he,  
 You would have slipt like him; but he, like you,  
 Would not have been so stern.

ANG. Pray you, be gone.

ISAB. I would to heaven I had your potency,  
 And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?  
 No; I would tell what 't were to be a judge,  
 And what a prisoner.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] Ay, touch him; there's the 70  
 vein.

ANG. Your brother is a forfeit of the law,  
 And you but waste your words.

ISAB. Alas, alas!

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;  
 And He that might the vantage best have took  
 Found out the remedy. How would you be,  
 If He, which is the top of judgement, should  
 But judge you as you are? O, think on that;  
 And mercy then will breathe within your lips,  
 Like man new made.

ANG. Be you content, fair maid;  
 It is the law, not I condemn your brother: 80

76 *top of judgement*] Dante uses precisely the same phrase: "Cima di  
 giudicio," *Purg.*, 673.

79 *Like man new made*] Like man regenerated, in the scriptural sense.  
 Cf. *St. John* iii, 3-8: "Except a man be born again," etc.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

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Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,  
It should be thus with him: he must die to-morrow.

ISAB. To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him,  
spare him!

He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens  
We kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven  
With less respect than we do minister  
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you;  
Who is it that hath died for this offence?  
There's many have committed it.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] Ay, well said.

ANG. The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept: <sup>90</sup>  
Those many had not dared to do that evil,  
If the first that did the edict infringe  
Had answer'd for his deed: now 't is awake,  
Takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet,  
Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils,  
Either now, or by remissness new-conceived,  
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,  
Are now to have no successive degrees,  
But, ere they live, to end.

ISAB. Yet show some pity.

ANG. I show it most of all when I show justice; <sup>100</sup>  
For then I pity those I do not know,  
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall;

85 *fowl of season*] a fowl when fit for killing, at the right season.

92 *If the first, etc.*] The metre seems to require some such change as *If he the first* or *If the first man*.

95 *glass*] magic crystal.

102 *Which a dismiss'd . . . gall*] Whom the dismissal or dropping of the charge would cause subsequent irritation.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,  
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;  
Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

ISAB. So you must be the first that gives this sen-  
tence,

And he, that suffers. O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] That 's well said.

ISAB. Could great men thunder 110  
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,  
For every pelting, petty officer  
Would use his heaven for thunder.  
Nothing but thunder! Merciful Heaven,  
Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt  
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak  
Than the soft myrtle: but man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he 's most assured, 120  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,  
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] O, to him, to him, wench! he  
will relent;  
He 's coming; I perceive 't.

---

120 *His glassy essence*] His brittle being.

122-123 *who . . . mortal*] who, with human capacity for mirth, would  
all laugh till they died, laugh themselves out of their immortality,  
never do anything but laugh.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

PROV. [Aside] Pray heaven she wins him!  
 ISAB. We cannot weigh our brother with ourself:  
 Great men may jest with saints; 't is wit in them,  
 But in the less foul profanation.  
 LUCIO. Thou 'rt i' the right, girl; more o' that.  
 ISAB. That in the captain 's but a choleric word, 130  
 Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.  
 LUCIO. [Aside to Isab.] Art avised o' that? more on 't.  
 ANG. Why do you put these sayings upon me?  
 ISAB. Because authority, though it err like others,  
 Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself,  
 That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;  
 Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know  
 That 's like my brother's fault: if it confess  
 A natural guiltiness such as is his,  
 Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue 140  
 Against my brother's life.  
 ANG. [Aside] She speaks, and 't is  
 Such sense, that my sense breeds with it. Fare you well.  
 ISAB. Gentle my lord, turn back.  
 ANG. I will bethink me: come again to-morrow.

126 *weigh . . . with ourself*] One cannot treat one's neighbour as on precisely the same level with one's self; we are not all of the same scale. Cf. V, i, 111, *infra*: "He would have *weigh'd* [*i.e.*, judged] *thy brother by himself*."

132 *Art avised o' that?*] Are you sure of that?

136 *skins the vice*] covers with a skin. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 147: "It [*i.e.*, that flattering unctio] will but *skin and film* the ulcerous place."

142 *my sense breeds with it*] my sensual desire is generated, excited by what she says, by her reasonableness. "Sense" in its lustful significance figures in I, iv, 59, *supra*, and in line 169, *infra*.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

ISAB. Hark how I'll bribe you: good my lord, turn  
back.

ANG. How? bribe me?

ISAB. Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with  
you.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] You had marr'd all else.

ISAB. Not with fond sicles of the tested gold,  
Or stones whose rates are either rich or poor 150  
As fancy values them; but with true prayers  
That shall be up at heaven and enter there  
Ere sun-rise, prayers from preserved souls,  
From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate  
To nothing temporal.

ANG. Well; come to me to-morrow.

LUCIO. [*Aside to Isab.*] Go to; 't is well; away!

ISAB. Heaven keep your honour safe!

ANG. [*Aside*] Amen:

For I am that way going to temptation,  
Where prayers cross.

ISAB. At what hour to-morrow  
Shall I attend your lordship?

ANG. At any time 'fore noon. 160

ISAB. 'Save your honour!

[*Exeunt Isabella, Lucio, and Provost.*]

ANG. From thee, — even from thy virtue!

---

149 *sicles*] The Folio reading is *sickles*, which Pope altered to *shekels*.  
No doubt "shekels" is what is meant. In the translation of the  
Bible known as "The Bishop's Bible," which was the authorised  
version of Elizabeth's reign, the word is spelt "sicles."

159 *cross*] hinder, in the way.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

What 's this, what 's this? Is this her fault or mine?  
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?

Ha!

Not she; nor doth she tempt: but it is I  
That, lying by the violet in the sun,  
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,  
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be  
That modesty may more betray our sense  
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground  
enough, 170

Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,  
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!  
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?  
Dost thou desire her foully for those things  
That make her good? O, let her brother live:  
Thieves for their robbery have authority  
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,  
That I desire to hear her speak again,  
And feast upon her eyes? What is 't I dream on? 180  
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,  
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous  
Is that temptation that doth goad us on  
To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,  
With all her double vigour, art and nature,

165-168 *I . . . season*] Unlike the violet, the flower which flourishes in the summer sun, I, like carrion, grow putrid in the sunlight, in the season that should encourage healthy growth.

169 *sense*] sensual desire. Cf. line 142, *supra*, and note.

172 *evils*] doubtfully explained as "privies." The word may merely be used for "evil, unsanctified deeds." Collier suggested "offalls."



SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid  
Subdues me quite. Ever till now,  
When men were fond, I smiled, and wonder'd how.  
[*Exit.*]

SCENE III—A ROOM IN A PRISON

*Enter, severally, DUKE disguised as a friar, and PROVOST*

DUKE. Hail to you, provost! so I think you are.

PROV. I am the provost. What's your will, good  
friar?

DUKE. Bound by my charity and my blest order,  
I come to visit the afflicted spirits  
Here in the prison. Do me the common right  
To let me see them, and to make me know  
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister  
To them accordingly.

PROV. I would do more than that, if more were  
needful.

*Enter JULIET*

Look, here comes one: a gentlewoman of mine, 10  
Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,  
Hath blister'd her report: she is with child;

---

11 *flaws of her own youth*] *Flaws*, the original reading, was altered by D'Avenant to *flames*, with which "blister'd" in the next line undoubtedly harmonises. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 84, "*flaming* youth." But the change here is not essential. "Blister'd her report" merely means "disfigured her fame."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

And he that got it, sentenced; a young man  
More fit to do another such offence  
Than die for this.

DUKE. When must he die?

PROV. As I do think, to-morrow.  
I have provided for you: stay awhile, [To Juliet.  
And you shall be conducted.

DUKE. Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

JUL. I do; and bear the shame most patiently. 20

DUKE. I'll teach you how you shall arraign your  
conscience,

And try your penitence, if it be sound,  
Or hollowly put on.

JUL. I'll gladly learn.

DUKE. Love you the man that wrong'd you?

JUL. Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

DUKE. So, then, it seems your most offenceful act  
Was mutually committed?

JUL. Mutually.

DUKE. Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

JUL. I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE. 'T is meet so, daughter: but lest you do re-  
pent, 30

As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,

---

30-34 *lest . . . stand in fear*] The speech is unfinished, owing to Juliet's interruption. The Duke bids the girl beware lest her repentance is merely because her sin has brought her to shame. Such sorrow is a selfish sense of personal disgrace; she is not conscious of an offence against God. This shows that we avoid offending God not from love of him, but from selfish fear of consequences.

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,  
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,  
But as we stand in fear, —

JUL. I do repent me, as it is an evil,  
And take the shame with joy.

DUKE. There rest.  
Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,  
And I am going with instruction to him.

Grace go with you, *Benedicite!* [Exit. 40

JUL. Must die to-morrow! O injurious love,  
That respites me a life, whose very comfort  
Is still a dying horror!

PROV. 'T is pity of him. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV—A ROOM IN ANGELO'S HOUSE

*Enter ANGELO*

ANG. When I would pray and think, I think and  
pray  
To several subjects. Heaven hath my empty words;  
Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,  
Anchors on Isabel: Heaven in my mouth,  
As if I did but only chew his name;  
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil  
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied,  
Is like a good thing, being often read,

---

40 *love*] Hanmer substituted *law*. But the original reading, *love*, probably means here indulgence or kindness.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

Grown fear'd and tedious; yea, my gravity,  
Wherein — let no man hear me — I take pride, 10  
Could I with boot change for an idle plume,  
Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form,  
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,  
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls  
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood:  
Let 's write good angel on the devil's horn;  
'T is not the devil's crest.

*Enter a Servant*

How now! who 's there?

SERV. One Isabel, a sister, desires access to you.

ANG. Teach her the way. O heavens!

Why does my blood thus muster to my heart, 20  
Making both it unable for itself,  
And dispossessing all my other parts  
Of necessary fitness?  
So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons;  
Come all to help him, and so stop the air  
By which he should revive: and even so  
The general subject to a well-wish'd king

---

9 *fear'd*] approached with fear or reluctance, dreaded. The commonly substituted reading *sear'd* is unnecessary.

11-12 *with boot . . . for vain*] with advantage . . . in vain, idly.

16-17 *Let's write . . . crest*] You may inscribe an innocent legend on the devil's horn, but you won't make innocence the genuine motto of the devil. The devil's vicious propensities are not to be changed by any external label.

27-30] See note on I, i, 68, *supra*. "The general" means "the crowd," as in *Hamlet*, II, ii, 430: "caviare to *the general*."

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness  
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love  
Must needs appear offence.

*Enter ISABELLA*

How now, fair maid? 30

ISAB. I am come to know your pleasure.

ANG. That you might know it, would much better  
please me

Than to demand what 't is. Your brother cannot live.

ISAB. Even so. — Heaven keep your honour!

ANG. Yet may he live awhile; and, it may be,  
As long as you or I: yet he must die.

ISAB. Under your sentence?

ANG. Yea.

ISAB. When, I beseech you? that in his reprieve,  
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted 40  
That his soul sicken not.

ANG. Ha! fie, these filthy vices! It were as good  
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen  
A man already made, as to remit  
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image  
In stamps that are forbid: 't is all as easy

---

40 *so fitted*] so furnished, so prepared (with religious counsel).

42-46 *It were . . . forbid*] It were as right to pardon a murder as to  
pardon the wanton indulgence in the sweet sin of fornication. The  
metaphor of coinage in this connection is very common. Cf. *Edward*  
*III* (1596), II, i, 258: "To stamp his [*i.e.*, the king of heaven's] *image*  
*in forbidden metal*," and *Cymb.*, II, v, 5: "When I was stamped, some  
*coiner* with his tools Made me a *counterfeit*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

Falsely to take away a life true made,  
As to put metal in restrained means  
To make a false one.

ISAB. 'T is set down so in heaven, but not in earth. 50

ANG. Say you so? then I shall pose you quickly.  
Which had you rather, — that the most just law  
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,  
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness  
As she that he hath stain'd?

ISAB. Sir, believe this,  
I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANG. I talk not of your soul: our compell'd sins  
Stand more for number than for accompt.

ISAB. How say you?

ANG. Nay, I 'll not warrant that; for I can speak 60  
Against the thing I say. Answer to this: —  
I, now the voice of the recorded law,  
Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life:  
Might there not be a charity in sin  
To save this brother's life?

ISAB. Please you to do 't,  
I 'll take it as a peril to my soul,  
It is no sin at all, but charity.

ANG. Pleased you to do 't at peril of your soul,  
Were equal poise of sin and charity.

---

48 *in restrained means*] after forbidden methods.

54 *sweet uncleanness*] Cf. line 45, *supra*, "saucy sweetness."

57-58 *our compell'd sins . . . accompt*] Sinful acts, to which we are forced  
by violence, are ciphered up but are not entered in the account for  
which we are held liable.

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

ISAB. That I do beg his life, if it be sin,  
 Heaven let me bear it! you granting of my suit, 70  
 If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer  
 To have it added to the faults of mine,  
 And nothing of your answer.

ANG. Nay, but hear me.  
 Your sense pursues not mine: either you are ignorant,  
 Or seem so, craftily; and that's not good.

ISAB. Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,  
 But graciously to know I am no better.

ANG. Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright  
 When it doth tax itself; as these black masks  
 Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder 80  
 Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me;  
 To be received plain, I'll speak more gross:  
 Your brother is to die.

ISAB. So.

---

73 *nothing of your answer*] nothing for which you should be made responsible.

80 *Proclaim an enshield beauty*] The general meaning is that beauty, which hides behind black masks, excites more public notice or expectation than beauty which is openly displayed. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.* I, i, 236-237: "These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows, Being black, put us in mind they hide the fair." The word "enshield," the original reading, is not found elsewhere. It is ordinarily interpreted as "shielded" or "concealed." Unsatisfactory emendations, e.g., *inshell'd*, *concealed*, have been suggested. A seventeenth-century gloss (in the copy of the First Folio now belonging to Mr. Marsden J. Perry of Providence, R. I.) substituted *enshrined*. This reading is strongly supported by Spenser's *Hymn in Honour of Beautie* (line 188): "What booteth that celestial ray If it in darkness be *enshrined* ever?"

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

ANG. And his offence is so, as it appears,  
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

ISAB. True.

ANG. Admit no other way to save his life, —  
As I subscribe not that, nor any other, 90  
But in the loss of question, — that you, his sister,  
Finding yourself desired of such a person,  
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,  
Could fetch your brother from the manacles  
Of the all-building law; and that there were  
No earthly mean to save him, but that either  
You must lay down the treasures of your body  
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer;  
What would you do?

ISAB. As much for my poor brother as myself:  
That is, were I under the terms of death, 100  
The impression of keen whips I 'ld wear as rubies,  
And strip myself to death, as to a bed  
That longing have been sick for, ere I 'ld yield  
My body up to shame.

ANG. Then must your brother die.

ISAB. And 't were the cheaper way:  
Better it were a brother died at once,

---

86 *that pain*] the prescribed penalty, punishment.

90 *in the loss of question*] in idle talk, in the waste of words for the sake of argument.

94 *all-building law*] law on which everything is built, law which is the foundation of everything. Dr. Johnson substituted *all-binding*, but the original reading is more pointed.

103 *longing have been*] "I" is here implied to govern "have been." Such an ellipse is rare.



SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Than that a sister, by redeeming him,  
Should die for ever.

ANG. Were not you, then, as cruel as the sentence  
That you have slander'd so? 110

ISAB. Ignomy in ransom and free pardon  
Are of two houses: lawful mercy  
Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANG. You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;  
And rather proved the sliding of your brother  
A merriment than a vice.

ISAB. O, pardon me, my lord; it oft falls out,  
To have what we would have, we speak not what we  
mean:

I something do excuse the thing I hate,  
For his advantage that I dearly love. 120

ANG. We are all frail.

ISAB. Else let my brother die,  
If not a feodary, but only he  
Owe and succeed thy weakness.

ANG. Nay, women are frail too.

ISAB. Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves;  
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.  
Women!— Help Heaven! men their creation mar  
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;

111 *Ignomy*] A common abbreviation of ignominy. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, V, x, 33: "*ignomy* and shame."

122-123 *If not a feodary . . . weakness*] I would let my brother die, if he stood alone; if he had no "feodary" (*i. e.*, associate) in his sin; if he alone owned and followed the weakness, which you admit.

127-128 *men . . . by them*] men debase their nature by taking advantage of these weak creatures.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

For we are soft as our complexions are,  
And credulous to false prints.

ANG. I think it well: 130  
And from this testimony of your own sex, —  
Since, I suppose, we are made to be no stronger  
Than faults may shake our frames, — let me be bold; —  
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,  
That is, a woman; if you be more, you 're none;  
If you be one, — as you are well express'd  
By all external warrants, — show it now,  
By putting on the destined livery.

ISAB. I have no tongue but one: gentle my lord,  
Let me entreat you speak the former language. 140

ANG. Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISAB. My brother did love Juliet,  
And you tell me that he shall die for it.

ANG. He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

ISAB. I know your virtue hath a license in 't,  
Which seems a little fouler than it is,  
To pluck on others. ✓

ANG. Believe me, on mine honour,  
My words express my purpose.

130 *credulous to false prints*] apt to trust falsehood, prone to receive counterfeited impressions. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, ii, 30-31: "How easy is it for the proper-*false* In women's *waxen* hearts to *set* their *forms*!"

132-133 *no stronger . . . Than faults . . .*] not so strong but that faults . . .

145-147 *your virtue . . . To pluck on others*] Your virtue assumes this tone of licentiousness, which sounds worse than it is, in order to test other people, to draw them into damaging admissions.

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ISAB. Ha! little honour to be much believed,  
 And most pernicious purpose!— Seeming, seeming!— 150  
 I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for 't:  
 Sign me a present pardon for my brother,  
 Or with an outstretch'd throat I 'll tell the world aloud  
 What man thou art.

ANG. Who will believe thee, Isabel?  
 My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,  
 My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,  
 Will so your accusation overweigh,  
 That you shall stifle in your own report,  
 And smell of calumny. I have begun;  
 And now I give my sensual race the rein: 160  
 Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;  
 Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,  
 That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother  
 By yielding up thy body to my will;  
 Or else he must not only die the death,  
 But thy unkindness shall his death draw out  
 To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,  
 Or, by the affection that now guides me most,  
 I 'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,  
 Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true. [*Exit.*]

150 *Seeming*] Hypocrisy, counterfeit virtue. Cf. *false seeming*, line 14, *supra*.

156 *My vouch*] My declaration, testimony. Cf. "as he *vouches*" (*i. e.*, asserts, declares), *infra*, V, i, 148.

160 *sensual race*] sensual bent, disposition. Cf. *Tempest*, I, ii, 358: "thy vile *race*."

162 *prolixious blushes*] blushes inviting delay. Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ix, 311, "and sweet, *reluctant*, amorous *delay*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT II

---

ISAB. To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, <sup>171</sup>  
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,  
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,  
Either of condemnation or approval;  
Bidding the law make court'sy to their will;  
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,  
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:  
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,  
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour,  
That, had he twenty heads to tender down <sup>180</sup>  
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,  
Before his sister should her body stoop  
To such abhorr'd pollution.  
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:  
More than our brother is our chastity.  
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,  
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest. [*Exit.*]

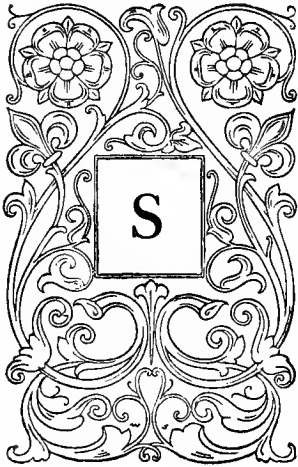


ACT THIRD — SCENE I

A ROOM IN THE PRISON

*Enter DUKE disguised as before, CLAUDIO, and PROVOST*

DUKE



O, THEN, YOU HOPE OF  
pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUD. The miserable have  
no other medicine

But only hope:

I've hope to live, and am pre-  
pared to die.

DUKE. Be absolute for death;  
either death or life

Shall thereby be the sweeter.

Reason thus with life:

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
That none but fools would keep:

a breath thou art,

Servile to all the skyey influences,  
That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,  
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;

10

*5 Be absolute]* Be resolved, make up your mind.

[ 57 ]

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

---

For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun,  
 And yet runn'st toward him still. Thou art not noble;  
 For all the accommodations that thou bear'st  
 Are nursed by baseness. Thou 'rt by no means valiant;  
 For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork  
 Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,  
 And that thou oft provokest; yet grossly fear'st  
 Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;  
 For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains 20  
 That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;  
 For what thou hast not, still thou strivest to get,  
 And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not certain;  
 For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,  
 After the moon. If thou art rich, thou 'rt poor;  
 For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,  
 Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,  
 And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;  
 For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,  
 The mere effusion of thy proper loins, 30  
 Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,  
 For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,  
 But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,  
 Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth  
 Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms  
 Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,

16-17 *fork Of a poor worm*] forked tongue of a snake or adder. Cf. *Macbeth*, IV, i, 16, "adder's fork."

24-25 *thy complexion . . . moon*] thy temperament is liable to strange manifestations of change under the influence of the inconstant moon.

34-36 *thy blessed youth . . . eld*] Youth is a prey to the cares of age and begs money of trembling and decrepit old men.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,  
To make thy riches pleasant. What 's yet in this  
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life  
Lie hid moe thousand deaths: yet death we fear, 40  
That makes these odds all even.

CLAUD. I humbly thank you.  
To sue to live, I find I seek to die;  
And, seeking death, find life: let it come on.

ISAB. [*within*] What, ho! Peace here; grace and good  
company!

PROV. Who 's there? come in: the wish deserves a  
welcome.

DUKE. Dear sir, ere long I 'll visit you again.

CLAUD. Most holy sir, I thank you.

*Enter ISABELLA*

ISAB. My business is a word or two with Claudio.

PROV. And very welcome. Look, signior, here 's your  
sister. 50

DUKE. Provost, a word with you.

PROV. As many as you please.

DUKE. Bring me to hear them speak, where I may be  
concealed. [*Exeunt Duke and Provost.*]

CLAUD. Now, sister, what 's the comfort?

ISAB. Why,  
As all comforts are; most good, most good indeed.

---

57 *As all . . . indeed*] The line scans ill. But Isabella's perturbation justifies the irregularity. The sense is improved by the substitution of a comma for the semicolon after "are." Pope and other editors omit the second *most good*.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

---

Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,  
Intends you for his swift ambassador,  
Where you shall be an everlasting leiger: 60  
Therefore your best appointment make with speed;  
To-morrow you set on.

CLAUD. Is there no remedy?

ISAB. None, but such remedy as, to save a head,  
To cleave a heart in twain.

CLAUD. But is there any?

ISAB. Yes, brother, you may live:  
There is a devilish mercy in the judge,  
If you 'll implore it, that will free your life,  
But fetter you till death.

CLAUD. Perpetual durance?

ISAB. Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,  
Though all the world's vastidity you had, 70  
To a determined scope.

CLAUD. But in what nature?

ISAB. In such a one as, you consenting to 't,  
Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,  
And leave you naked.

CLAUD. Let me know the point.

ISAB. O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,

---

60 *an everlasting leiger*] a permanent resident minister.

61 *appointment*] preparation for travel, outfit, equipment. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 77, "disappointed" (*i. e.*, unprepared, ill equipped), and in modern usage "a well-*appointed* household."

69-71 *a restraint . . . scope*] a confinement, although you had the vastness of the world to roam over, within the fixed limits (of shame and remorse). The Folio reading, *Through* in line 70, is indefensible. Rowe substituted *Though*.





MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

---

CLAUD. The prenzie Angelo!

ISAB. O, 't is the cunning livery of hell,  
The damned'st body to invest and cover  
In prenzie guards! Dost thou think, Claudio? —  
If I would yield him my virginity,  
Thou mightst be freed.

CLAUD. O heavens! it cannot be. 100

ISAB. Yes, he would give 't thee, from this rank offence  
So to offend him still. This night 's the time  
That I should do what I abhor to name,  
Or else thou diest to-morrow.

CLAUD. Thou shalt not do 't.

ISAB. O, were it but my life,  
I 'ld throw it down for your deliverance  
As frankly as a pin.

CLAUD. Thanks, dear Isabel.

ISAB. Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow.

CLAUD. Yes. Has he affections in him,  
That thus can make him bite the law by the nose, 110

---

95 *The prenzie Angelo*] Thus the First Folio, for which the Second and later Folios reasonably substitute *princely*, both here and in line 98. "Prenzie" has been justified as a variant of the old Scotch "prunse," *i. e.*, "prim," "demure," which Burns used in the form "primsie." But no such word seems known elsewhere to Elizabethan literature.

98 *guards*] The ornamental facings or border of a livery or uniform. Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 54, "*guards* on wanton Cupid's hose."

101-102 *he would give . . . still*] he would give you, as the result of this noisome sin of mine, liberty to commit the offence, for which he now condemns you.

109-111 *affections . . . force*] passions . . . enforce.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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When he would force it? Sure, it is no sin;  
Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

ISAB. Which is the least?

CLAUD. If it were damnable, he being so wise,  
Why would he for the momentary trick  
Be perdurably fined? — O Isabel!

ISAB. What says my brother?

CLAUD. Death is a fearful thing.

ISAB. And shamed life a hateful.

CLAUD. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot; 120  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and incertain thought  
Imagine howling: — 't is too horrible!  
The weariest and most loathed worldly life 130  
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

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122 *delighted*] accustomed to delight or joy.

128 *thought*] Thus the Folios. Theobald substituted *thoughts*, making the word the subject of "imagine." This emendation seems reasonable. As the text stands, "those that" must govern "imagine," of which "thought" must be the object.

131 *penury*] Thus the Second and later Folios. The First Folio has the misprint *periury*.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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ISAB. Alas, alas!

CLAUD. Sweet sister, let me live:  
 What sin you do to save a brother's life,  
 Nature dispenses with the deed so far  
 That it becomes a virtue.

ISAB. O you beast!  
 O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!  
 Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?  
 Is 't not a kind of incest, to take life 140  
 From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?  
 Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!  
 For such a warped slip of wilderness  
 Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance!  
 Die, perish! Might but my bending down  
 Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:  
 I 'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,  
 No word to save thee.

CLAUD. Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISAB. O, fie, fie, fie!  
 Thy sin 's not accidental, but a trade. 150  
 Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:  
 'T is best that thou diest quickly.

CLAUD. O, hear me, Isabella!

*Re-enter DUKE*

DUKE. Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

ISAB. What is your will?

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136 *dispenses with*] grants dispensation for.

142 *Heaven shield*] Cf. *All 's Well*, I, iii, 159: "God shield [*i.e.*, forbid] you mean it not!" "God shield," *i.e.*, "God forbid," is common in Elizabethan authors.

143 *slip of wilderness*] slip of wildness, wild cub.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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DUKE. Might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have some speech with you: the satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit.

ISAB. I have no superfluous leisure; my stay must be stolen out of other affairs; but I will attend you awhile. <sup>159</sup>  
[*Walks apart.*]

DUKE. Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an assay of her virtue to practise his judgement with the disposition of natures: she, having the truth of honour in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore prepare yourself to death: do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fallible: tomorrow you must die; go to your knees, and make ready.

CLAUD. Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it. <sup>171</sup>

DUKE. Hold you there: farewell. [*Exit Claudio.*]  
Provost, a word with you!

*Re-enter PROVOST*

PROV. What's your will, father?

DUKE. That now you are come, you will be gone. Leave me awhile with the maid: my mind promises with my habit no loss shall touch her by my company.

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163 *practise . . . natures*] exercise his judgment in the study of different temperaments.

167-168 *do not satisfy . . . fallible*] do not feed your courage with false hopes.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

PROV. In good time.

178

[*Exit Provost. Isabella comes forward.*]

DUKE. The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good: the goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair. The assault that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath conveyed to my understanding; and, but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How will you do to content this substitute, and to save your brother?

ISAB. I am now going to resolve him: I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born. But, O, how much is the good Duke deceived in Angelo! If ever he return and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government.

191

DUKE. That shall not be much amiss: yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he made trial of you only. Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings: to the love I have in doing good a remedy presents itself. I do make myself believe that you may most uprightly do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit; redeem your brother from the angry law; do no stain to your own gracious person; and much please the absent Duke, if peradventure he shall ever return to have hearing of this business.

178 *In good time*] À la bonne heure, so be it.

180-181 *goodness . . . goodness*] When virtue in a beautiful woman is held cheap, her beauty does not keep its purity long.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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ISAB. Let me hear you speak farther. I have spirit to do any thing that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit.

DUKE. Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful. Have you not heard speak of Mariana, the sister of Frederick the great soldier who miscarried at sea?

ISAB. I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name. 207

DUKE. She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him, the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo.

ISAB. Can this be so? did Angelo so leave her? 218

DUKE. Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour: in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake;

---

210 *contract and limit of the solemnity*] the contract of betrothal and the prescribed time within which the wedding ceremony should have taken place. Cf. I, ii, 138, *supra*, and note.

216 *combinate*] This word, which is found nowhere else, clearly means "bound," "pledged." It would appear to be formed from "combine," which is occasionally used for "knit together," "pledge." Cf. IV, iii, 141, *infra*, "I am *combined* [*i. e.* pledged] by a sacred vow."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not.

ISAB. What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid from the world! What corruption in this life, that it will let this man live! But how out of this can she avail?

DUKE. It is a rupture that you may easily heal: and the cure of it not only saves your brother, but keeps you from dishonour in doing it.

ISAB. Show me how, good father.

230

DUKE. This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection: his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment in the current, made it more violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with his demands to the point; only refer yourself to this advantage, first, that your stay with him may not be long; that the time may have all shadow and silence in it; and the place answer to convenience. This being granted in course, — and now follows all, — we shall advise this wronged maid to stead up your appointment, go in your place; if the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompence: and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt Deputy scaled. The maid

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236-237 *refer yourself to this advantage*] bear this consideration in mind.  
245 *scaled*] used in a similar sense to that in *Cor. II, iii, 246*, “*scaling* [*i. e.*, weighing] his present bearing with his past.” Angelo will be weighed (and found wanting).



SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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will I frame and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?

ISAB. The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection. <sup>251</sup>

DUKE. It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo: if for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to Saint Luke's: there, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me; and dispatch with Angelo, that it may be quickly.

ISAB. I thank you for this comfort. Fare you well, good father. [*Exeunt severally.* 259

SCENE II—THE STREET BEFORE THE PRISON

*Enter, on one side, DUKE disguised as before; on the other, ELBOW, and Officers with POMPEY*

ELB. Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard.

DUKE. O heavens! what stuff is here?

POM. 'T was never merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm; and

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3 *bastard*] A quibble on the word, which was the name of a sweet Spanish wine.

7 *a furred gown*] The dress of merchants, whose business often included

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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furred with fox and lamb-skins too, to signify, that craft, being richer than innocency, stands for the facing.

ELB. Come your way, sir. 'Bless you, good father <sup>10</sup> friar.

DUKE. And you, good brother father. What offence hath this man made you, sir?

ELB. Marry, sir, he hath offended the law: and, sir, we take him to be a thief too, sir; for we have found upon him, sir, a strange picklock, which we have sent to the Deputy.

DUKE. Fie, sirrah! a bawd, a wicked bawd!  
The evil that thou causest to be done,  
That is thy means to live. Do thou but think  
What 't is to cram a maw or clothe a back  
From such a filthy vice: say to thyself, 20  
From their abominable and beastly touches  
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.  
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,  
So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.

POM. Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir; but yet, sir, I would prove —

DUKE. Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,  
Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer:  
Correction and instruction must both work  
Ere this rude beast will profit. 30

---

money-lending. Cf. *Lear*, IV, vi, 163–165: “The *usurer* hangs the cozener . . . Robes and *furr'd gowns* hide all.”

11 *brother father*] a play on Elbow's “father *friar*” (*i.e.*, brother) in the preceding line.

22 *array*] Theobald's happy emendation for the original reading *away*.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

ELB. He must before the Deputy, sir; he has given him warning: the Deputy cannot abide a whoremaster: if he be a whoremonger, and comes before him, he were as good go a mile on his errand.

DUKE. That we were all, as some would seem to be, From our faults, as faults from seeming, free!

ELB. His neck will come to your waist, — a cord, sir.

POM. I spy comfort; I cry bail. Here 's a gentleman and a friend of mine.

*Enter LUCIO*

LUCIO. How now, noble Pompey! What, at the <sup>40</sup> wheels of Cæsar? art thou led in triumph? What, is there none of Pygmalion's images, newly made woman, to be had now, for putting the hand in the pocket and extracting it clutched? What reply, ha? What sayest thou to this tune, matter and method? Is 't not drowned i' the last rain, ha? What sayest thou, Trot? Is the

33-34 *he were . . . errand*] he were well out of the way.

36 *From our faults, as faults from seeming, free!*] The Duke seems to wish that we were all as unmistakably true ("free from faults") as downright offences are innocent of hypocrisy or the counterfeit of virtue. Isabella had already called Angelo's hypocrisy "seeming" (II, iv, 150, *supra*).

37 *your waist, — a cord*] His neck will be tied like the friar's waist, — with a rope.

42 *newly made woman*] women as fresh and untouched as Pygmalion's statue of Galatea, when it became flesh and blood. Lucio is asking in his frivolous way whether the supply of such unsullied greatness is exhausted, even if one is ready to pay the full price.

45 *Is 't not drowned, etc.*] A colloquial expression for "are our prospects damped?"

46 *Trot*] A familiar term of address, usually applied to a bawd or to a

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world as it was, man? Which is the way? Is it sad, and few words? or how? The trick of it?

DUKE. Still thus, and thus; still worse!

LUCIO. How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? <sup>50</sup>  
Procures she still, ha?

POM. Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.

LUCIO. Why, 't is good; it is the right of it; it must be so: ever your fresh whore and your powdered bawd: an unshunned consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison, Pompey?

POM. Yes, faith, sir.

LUCIO. Why, 't is not amiss, Pompey. Farewell: go say I sent thee thither. For debt, Pompey? or how? <sup>60</sup>

ELB. For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

LUCIO. Well, then, imprison him: if imprisonment be the due of a bawd, why, 't is his right: bawd is he doubtless, and of antiquity too; bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey: you will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house.

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decrepit old woman. Cf. *T. of Shrew*, I, ii, 77-78: "an old *trot* with ne'er a tooth in her head."

<sup>52-55</sup> *beef . . . tub . . . powdered*] a coarse allusion. Salted or powdered beef was kept in tubs, and tubs called "sweating tubs," or "powdering tubs," were used in the medicinal treatment of venereal disease. Cf. *Hen. V*, II, i, 70: "the *powdering* [*i.e.*, salt]-*tub* of infamy." Cf. "the *sweat*," I, ii, 79, *supra*, and note.

<sup>56</sup> *unshunned*] unshunnable, inevitable.

<sup>66</sup> *husband . . . house*] an allusion to the etymology of husband from "house," and "band" (*i.e.*, dweller or holder).

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

POM. I hope, sir, your good worship will be my bail.

LUCIO. No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not the wear. I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage: if you take it not patiently, why, your mettle is the more. <sup>70</sup>  
Adieu, trusty Pompey. 'Bless you, friar.

DUKE. And you.

LUCIO. Does Bridget paint still, Pompey, ha?

ELB. Come your ways, sir; come.

POM. You will not bail me, then, sir?

LUCIO. Then, Pompey, nor now. What news abroad, friar? what news?

ELB. Come your ways, sir; come.

LUCIO. Go to kennel, Pompey; go. [*Exeunt Elbow, Pompey and Officers.*] What news, friar, of the Duke? <sup>80</sup>

DUKE. I know none. Can you tell me of any?

LUCIO. Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other some, he is in Rome: but where is he, think you?

DUKE. I know not where; but wheresoever, I wish him well.

LUCIO. It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the state, and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to 't.

DUKE. He does well in 't. <sup>90</sup>

LUCIO. A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him: something too crabbed that way, friar.

DUKE. It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

LUCIO. Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is well allied: but it is impossible to extirp it

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. They say this Angelo was not made by man and woman after this downright way of creation: is it true, think you?

DUKE. How should he be made, then?

99

LUCIO. Some report a sea-maid spawned him; some, that he was begot between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that, when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true: and he is a motion generative; that 's infallible.

DUKE. You are pleasant, sir, and speak apace.

LUCIO. Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man! Would the Duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hanged a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand: he had some feeling of the sport; he knew the service, and that instructed him to mercy.

112

DUKE. I never heard the absent Duke much detected for women; he was not inclined that way.

LUCIO. O, sir, you are deceived.

DUKE. 'T is not possible.

LUCIO. Who, not the Duke? yes, your beggar of

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104-105 *he is a motion generative*] he has the reproductive powers of a puppet or puppet-show. "This ungenitured agent" (lines 162-163, *infra*) has the like significance, but Theobald's proposal to read *ungenerative* for *generative* is unconvincing.

113 *detected*] "charged," "accused," "arraigned," a common usage. Cf. Hooker, *Eccles. Polity* (1594): "The gentlewoman . . . *detecteth* herself of a crime."

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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fifty; and his use was to put a ducat in her clack-dish: the Duke had crotchets in him. He would be drunk too; that let me inform you. 120

DUKE. You do him wrong, surely.

LUCIO. Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow was the Duke: and I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing.

DUKE. What, I prithee, might be the cause?

LUCIO. No, pardon; 't is a secret must be locked within the teeth and the lips: but this I can let you understand, the greater file of the subject held the Duke to be wise.

DUKE. Wise! why, no question but he was. 129

LUCIO. A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.

DUKE. Either this is envy in you, folly, or mistaking: the very stream of his life and the business he hath helmed must, upon a warranted need, give him a better proclamation. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman and a soldier. Therefore you speak unskilfully; or if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice.

LUCIO. Sir, I know him, and I love him. 139

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118 *clack-dish*] a wooden dish carried by beggars; the movable lid of which was clacked to attract notice.

128 *the greater file of the subject*] the majority of the people.

132-135 *the business . . . bringings-forth*] the affairs he has guided (or steered through) must, on an occasion which warranted (the production of evidence), declare a higher reputation. Let testimony be produced of what he has effected.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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DUKE. Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love.

LUCIO. Come, sir, I know what I know.

DUKE. I can hardly believe that, since you know not what you speak. But, if ever the Duke return, as our prayers are he may, let me desire you to make your answer before him. If it be honest you have spoke, you have courage to maintain it: I am bound to call upon you; and, I pray you, your name?

LUCIO. Sir, my name is Lucio; well known to the Duke. 150

DUKE. He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report you.

LUCIO. I fear you not.

DUKE. O, you hope the Duke will return no more; or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite. But, indeed, I can do you little harm; you 'll forswear this again.

LUCIO. I 'll be hanged first: thou art deceived in me, friar. But no more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-morrow or no?

DUKE. Why should he die, sir? 160

LUCIO. Why? For filling a bottle with a tun-dish. I would the Duke we talk of were returned again: this ungenitured agent will unpeople the province with continency; sparrows must not build in his house-eaves, because they are lecherous. The Duke yet would have

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141 *dearer*] Hanmer's emendation of the original reading *dear*.

155 *too unhurtful an opposite*] too harmless an adversary.

162-163 *this ungenitured agent*] this deputy without generative power.

See lines 104-105, *supra*, and note.



SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to light: would he were returned! Marry, this Claudio is condemned for untrussing. Farewell, good friar: I prithee, pray for me. The Duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He 's not past it yet, and I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt brown bread and garlic: say that I said so. Farewell. [Exit.<sup>172</sup>

DUKE. No might nor greatness in mortality  
Can censure 'scape; back-wounding calumny  
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong  
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?  
But who comes here?

*Enter ESCALUS, PROVOST, and Officers with MISTRESS*

OVERDONE

ESCAL. Go; away with her to prison!

MRS OV. Good my lord, be good to me; your honour  
is accounted a merciful man; good my lord. 180

ESCAL. Double and treble admonition, and still forfeit  
in the same kind! This would make mercy swear and  
play the tyrant.

PROV. A bawd of eleven years' continuance, may it  
please your honour.

---

169-170 *eat mutton on Fridays*] A quibble on mutton in the slang sense of "loose woman." It would be sinful in the Duke, as a pious Catholic, to eat meat on Fridays.

170 *not past*] Hanmer's sensible emendation of the original reading *now past*.

181 *forfeit*] transgress. In early English this is the usual meaning of the word.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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MRS OV. My lord, this is one Lucio's information against me. Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in the Duke's time; he promised her marriage: his child is a year and a quarter old, come Philip and Jacob: I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me! 191

ESCAL. That fellow is a fellow of much license: let him be called before us. Away with her to prison! Go to; no more words. [*Exeunt Officers with Mistress Ov.*] Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered; Claudio must die to-morrow: let him be furnished with divines, and have all charitable preparation. If my brother wrought by my pity, it should not be so with him.

PROV. So please you, this friar hath been with him, and advised him for the entertainment of death. 200

ESCAL. Good even, good father.

DUKE. Bliss and goodness on you!

ESCAL. Of whence are you?

DUKE. Not of this country, though my chance is now To use it for my time: I am a brother Of gracious order, late come from the See In special business from his Holiness.

ESCAL. What news abroad i' the world? 208

DUKE. None, but that there is so great a fever on goodness, that the dissolution of it must cure it: novelty is only in request; and it as dangerous to be aged in any

---

189-190 *come Philip and Jacob*] a reference to the first of May, the festival of the apostles SS. Philip and James (Lat. Jacob-us).  
206 *the See*] the See of Rome.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure; but security enough to make fellowships accurst: — much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news. I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the Duke?

ESCAL. One that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself.

DUKE. What pleasure was he given to? 220

ESCAL. Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at any thing which professed to make him rejoice: a gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous; and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared. I am made to understand that you have lent him visitation.

DUKE. He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice: yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his frailty, many deceiving promises of life; which I, by my good leisure, have discredited to him, and now is he resolved to die. 232

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214 *but security . . . accurst*] Here "security" means "the act of standing surety" (for an embarrassed acquaintance, with the prospect of ruin to one's own estate). Social relations (*i. e.*, fellowships) are cursed by the commonness of the practice. Cf. *Proverbs* xi, 15: "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure."

224 *events*] fortunes.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT III

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ESCAL. You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have laboured for the poor gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty: but my brother justice have I found so severe, that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.

DUKE. If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenced himself. 240

ESCAL. I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.

DUKE. Peace be with you! [*Exeunt Escalus and Provost.*  
He who the sword of heaven will bear  
Should be as holy as severe;  
Pattern in himself to know,  
Grace to stand, and virtue go;  
More nor less to others paying  
Than by self-offenses weighing.  
Shame to him whose cruel striking  
Kills for faults of his own liking! 250  
Twice treble shame on Angelo,  
To weed my vice and let his grow!  
O, what may man within him hide,  
Though angel on the outward side!

---

233 *have . . . your function*] discharged your duty to Heaven.

237 *he is indeed Justice*] An allusion to the maxim "Summum jus, summa injuria."

246 *Grace . . . virtue go*] Grace whereon to stand secure (against temptation), and virtue wherewith to walk.

252 *To weed my vice*] To uproot another's vice.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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How may likeness made in crimes,  
Making practice on the times,  
To draw with idle spiders' strings  
Most ponderous and substantial things!  
Craft against vice I must apply:  
With Angelo to-night shall lie  
His old betrothed but despised;  
So disguise shall, by the disguised,  
Pay with falsehood false exacting,  
And perform an old contracting.

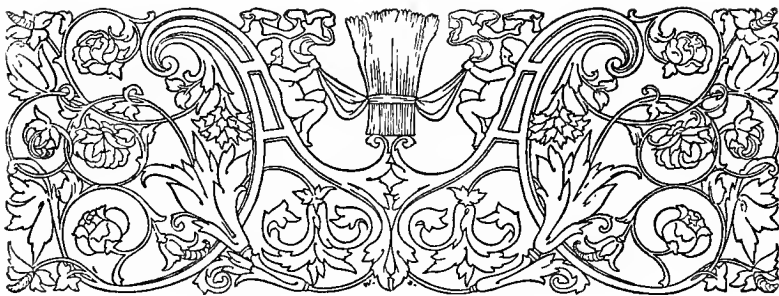
260

[*Exit.*

---

255-258 *How may likeness . . . substantial things*] This is the original reading, for which numerous unconvincing changes have been suggested. "Likeness" is probably identical with "seeming" (*i. e.*, hypocrisy, the counterfeit of virtue). See II, iv, 150, *supra*. The general meaning is, that hypocrisy, the product of crimes, which plot against or hoodwink the age, is capable, by means of frauds, flimsy as spiders' threads, of capturing weighty and substantial objects like riches and power.

262-264 *So disguise shall . . . contracting*] Thus the Folios. The words are difficult to interpret, and have not been satisfactorily emended. The meaning seems to be that the disguise which Mariana is assuming will, by the agency of the vicious Angelo, who wears the *false guise* of sanctity, satisfy deceptively his base demand, and fulfil an old standing contract.

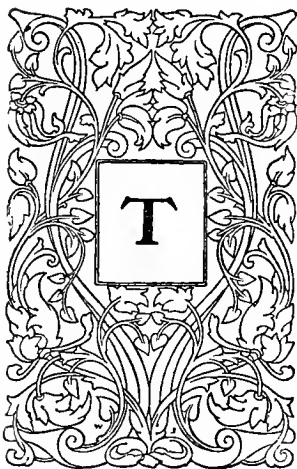


ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

THE MOATED GRANGE AT ST. LUKE'S

*Enter MARIANA and a Boy*

*Boy sings*



TAKE, O, TAKE THOSE LIPS  
way,

That so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn:  
But my kisses bring again, bring again;  
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd  
in vain.

MARI. Break off thy song,  
and haste thee quick away:  
Here comes a man of comfort,  
whose advise  
Hath often still'd my brawling  
discontent. *[Exit Boy.]*

*Enter DUKE disguised as before*

I cry you mercy, sir; and well could wish  
You had not found me here so musical:

10

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Let me excuse me, and believe me so,  
My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe.

DUKE. 'T is good; though music oft hath such a  
charm

To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.  
I pray you, tell me, hath any body inquired for me here  
to-day? much upon this time have I promised here to  
meet.

MARI. You have not been inquired after: I have sat  
here all day.

*Enter ISABELLA*

DUKE. I do constantly believe you. The time is come <sup>20</sup>  
even now. I shall crave your forbearance a little: may  
be I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to  
yourself.

MARI. I am always bound to you. [Exit.

DUKE. Very well met, and well come.  
What is the news from this good Deputy?

ISAB. He hath a garden circummured with brick,

---

1-6 ] This stanza is repeated with the addition of a second stanza by  
Fletcher in the latter's *Bloody Brother, or Rollo Duke of Normandy*,  
in Act V, Sc. 2. The two stanzas reappear together in Shakespeare's  
*Poems*, 1640. Shakespeare's exclusive responsibility for the first  
stanza need not be questioned.

6 *Seals of love . . . in vain*] Cf. *Sonnet cxlii*, 5-7, "those lips of thine . . .  
*seal'd false bonds of love* as oft of mine."

13 *My mirth . . . woe*] The music was out of tune with any disposition  
to merriment on my part. But it assuaged my sorrow.

17 *meet*] often used intransitively by Shakespeare. Cf. *As You Like  
It*, V, ii, 111-112, "as you love Phoebe, *meet*: and as I love no  
woman, I'll *meet*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;  
 And to that vineyard is a planched gate,  
 That makes his opening with this bigger key:  
 This other doth command a little door 30  
 Which from the vineyard to the garden leads;  
 There have I made my promise  
 Upon the heavy middle of the night  
 To call upon him.

DUKE. But shall you on your knowledge find this  
 way?

ISAB. I have ta'en a due and wary note upon 't:  
 With whispering and most guilty diligence,  
 In action all of precept, he did show me  
 The way twice o'er.

DUKE. Are there no other tokens  
 Between you 'greed concerning her observance? 40

ISAB. No, none, but only a repair i' the dark;  
 And that I have possess'd him my most stay  
 Can be but brief; for I have made him know  
 I have a servant comes with me along,  
 That stays upon me, whose persuasion is  
 I come about my brother.

28 *planned*] made of planks. Cf. Gorges' translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, 1614, Bk. I, p. 18, "The *planned* floore," *i. e.*, floor made of boards or planks.

29 *his opening*] its opening, *i. e.*, the opening of the gate.

32-34 *There have . . . upon him*] In the Folios these three lines are printed as two, the second line beginning at "heavy." Possibly Isabella suddenly lapses into prose.

38 *In action . . . precept*] Giving direction only by action, gesture.

40 *her observance*] her keeping the appointment.



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. 'T is well borne up.  
I have not yet made known to Mariana  
A word of this. What, ho! within! come forth!

*Re-enter MARIANA*

I pray you, be acquainted with this maid;  
She comes to do you good.

ISAB. I do desire the like. 50

DUKE. Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?

MARI. Good friar, I know you do, and have found it.

DUKE. Take, then, this your companion by the hand,  
Who hath a story ready for your ear.  
I shall attend your leisure: but make haste;  
The vaporous night approaches.

MARI. Will 't please you walk aside?

*[Exeunt Mariana and Isabella.]*

DUKE. O place and greatness, millions of false eyes  
Are stuck upon thee! volumes of report  
Run with these false and most contrarious quests 60  
Upon thy doings! thousand escapes of wit  
Make thee the father of their idle dreams,  
And rack thee in their fancies!

*Re-enter MARIANA and ISABELLA*

Welcome, how agreed?

ISAB. She 'll take the enterprise upon her, father,  
If you advise it.

---

58 *false eyes*] insidious, treacherous eyes.

60-61 *Run . . . escapes of wit*] Overflow with lying and self-contradictory  
prying inquiries into thy doings! thousand sportive and scurrilous  
sallies of wit, etc.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

DUKE. It is not my consent,  
But my entreaty too.

ISAB. Little have you to say  
When you depart from him, but, soft and low,  
“Remember now my brother.”

MARI. Fear me not.

DUKE. Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.  
He is your husband on a pre-contract: 70  
To bring you thus together, 't is no sin,  
Sith that the justice of your title to him  
Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go:  
Our corn 's to reap, for yet our tithe 's to sow. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II—A ROOM IN THE PRISON

*Enter PROVOST and POMPEY*

PROV. Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's  
head?

POM. If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be  
a married man, he 's his wife's head, and I can never cut  
off a woman's head.

PROV. Come, sir, leave me your snatches, and yield me  
a direct answer. To-morrow morning are to die Claudio

---

73 *flourish the deceit*] make the deceit fair or reputable. Cf. *Tw. Night*,  
III, iv, 354: “empty trunks, o'erflourish'd [*i.e.*, glossed or varnished  
over] by the devil.”

74 *Our corn . . . sow*] Johnson conjectured this expression to be prover-  
bial, and regarded “tithe” as standing for “harvest.” It is probably  
to be used for “grain.” Theobald and others recommend the sub-  
stitution for *tithe*, of *tilth*, *i. e.*, land ready for sowing. But “tithe”  
in the sense of “grain” makes the line intelligible.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

and Barnardine. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a helper: if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem you from your gyves; if not, you shall have your full time of imprisonment, and your deliverance with an unpitied whipping, for you have been a notorious bawd. <sup>10</sup>

POM. Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind; but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.

PROV. What, ho! Abhorson! Where's Abhorson, there?

*Enter ABHORSON*

ABHOR. Do you call, sir?

PROV. Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-morrow in your execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year, and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present, and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd. <sup>20</sup>

ABHOR. A bawd, sir? fie upon him! he will discredit our mystery.

PROV. Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale. *[Exit.*

POM. Pray, sir, by your good favour, — for surely, sir, a good favour you have, but that you have a hanging look, — do you call, sir, your occupation a mystery? <sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *mystery*] "Mystery," in the sense of calling or trade (from the Latin *ministerium*), has no etymological connection with "mystery" in the sense of a secret rite (from the Greek *μυστήριον*). The two words are here quibblingly confused.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

ABHOR. Ay, sir; a mystery.

POM. Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do prove my occupation a mystery: but what mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.

ABHOR. Sir, it is a mystery.

POM. Proof?

ABHOR. Every true man's apparel fits your thief: if it be too little for your thief, your true man thinks it big<sup>40</sup> enough; if it be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough: so every true man's apparel fits your thief.

*Re-enter PROVOST*

PROV. Are you agreed?

POM. Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

PROV. You, sirrah, provide your block and your axe to-morrow four o'clock.

ABHOR. Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade; follow.<sup>50</sup>

POM. I do desire to learn, sir: and I hope, if you have

---

39-42 *if it be too little . . . fits your thief*] The Folios assign this part of the speech to Pompey, and the poor chop logic which seeks to identify the honest man with the thief seems to be in his vein. But Capell and most succeeding editors transferred these far-fetched quibbles to the cynical hangman on the reasonable ground that they suggest professional knowledge, which Pompey would be unlikely to claim.

46 *ask forgiveness*] Cf. *As You Like It*, III, v, 3-6, "The common executioner . . . first begs pardon" (of his victim).

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me  
yare; for, truly, sir, for your kindness I owe you a good  
turn.

PROV. Call hither Barnardine and Claudio:

[*Exeunt Pompey and Abhorson.*]

The one has my pity; not a jot the other,  
Being a murderer, though he were my brother.

*Enter* CLAUDIO

Look, here 's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death:  
'T is now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow  
Thou must be made immortal. Where 's Barnardine? 60

CLAUD. As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless labour  
When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones:  
He will not wake.

PROV. Who can do good on him?  
Well, go, prepare yourself. [*Knocking within.*] But, hark,  
what noise? —  
Heaven give your spirits comfort! [*Exit Claudio.*] By  
and by. —

I hope it is some pardon or reprieve  
For the most gentle Claudio.

*Enter* DUKE *disguised as before*

Welcome, father.

DUKE. The best and wholesomest spirits of the night  
Envelop you, good Provost! Who call'd here of late?

PROV. None, since the curfew rung. 70

DUKE. Not Isabel?

---

54 *a good turn*] a turn off the ladder, on which the convict mounts the  
gallows; a slang term for a hanging.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

PROV. No.

DUKE. They will, then, ere 't be long.

PROV. What comfort is for Claudio?

DUKE. There 's some in hope.

PROV. It is a bitter deputy.

DUKE. Not so, not so; his life is parallel'd  
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice:

He doth with holy abstinence subdue

That in himself which he spurs on his power

To qualify in others: were he meal'd with that

Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;

But this being so, he 's just. 80 *[Knocking within.]*

Now are they come.

*[Exit Provost.]*

This is a gentle provost: seldom when

The steeled gaoler is the friend of men. *[Knocking within.]*

How now! what noise? That spirit 's possess'd with  
haste

That wounds the unsisting postern with these strokes.

*Re-enter PROVOST*

PROV. There he must stay until the officer  
'Arise to let him in: he is call'd up.

71 *They]* The Duke expects Mariana as well as Isabella.

75-76 *his life . . . justice]* his life runs parallel or square with the mark and character of his high conception of justice.

79 *meal'd]* stained, defiled. Cf. *Macb.*, IV, i, 123: "blood-bolter'd Banquo."

85 *unsisting]* Thus the first three Folios. The Fourth Folio substitutes *insisting*, and Rowe conjectured *unresisting*. "Unsisting" is unknown elsewhere. The meaning would seem to be that the postern gate offers comparatively small resistance.

SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,  
But he must die to-morrow?

PROV. None, sir, none.

DUKE. As near the dawning, provost, as it is, 90  
You shall hear more ere morning.

PROV. Happily  
You something know; yet I believe there comes  
No countermand; no such example have we:  
Besides, upon the very siege of justice  
Lord Angelo hath to the public ear  
Profess'd the contrary.

*Enter a MESSENGER*

This is his lordship's man.

DUKE. And here comes Claudio's pardon. 97

MES. [*Giving a paper*] My lord hath sent you this note;  
and by me this further charge, that you swerve not from  
the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other  
circumstance. Good morrow; for, as I take it, it is  
almost day.

PROV. I shall obey him. [*Exit Messenger.*]

DUKE. [*Aside*] This is his pardon, purchased by  
such sin  
For which the pardonner himself is in.  
Hence hath offence his quick celerity,  
When it is borne in high authority:

---

94 *siege*] seat. Cf. Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, II, iv, 44, line 5, "A stately  
*siege* [*i. e.*, seat, throne] of sovereign majesty."

96 *This is his lordship's man*] In the Folios this sentence is given to the  
Duke, and the following one to the provost. The change in the  
text, though generally adopted, is not essential.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

When vice makes mercy, mercy 's so extended,  
That for the fault's love is the offender friended.

Now, sir, what news?

109

PROV. I told you. Lord Angelo, belike thinking me remiss in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted putting-on; methinks strangely, for he hath not used it before.

DUKE. Pray you, let 's hear.

PROV. [*Reads*]

Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock; and in the afternoon Barnardine: for my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed; with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.

What say you to this, sir?

120

DUKE. What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in the afternoon?

PROV. A Bohemian born, but here nursed up and bred; one that is a prisoner nine years old.

DUKE. How came it that the absent Duke had not either delivered him to his liberty or executed him? I have heard it was ever his manner to do so.

PROV. His friends still wrought reprieves for him: and, indeed, his fact, till now in the government of Lord Angelo, came not to an undoubtful proof.

130

DUKE. It is now apparent?

PROV. Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

---

111 *putting-on*] spur, incitement. The verb "put on" is often used thus.



SCENE II MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? how seems he to be touched?

PROV. A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal.

DUKE. He wants advice.

139

PROV. He will hear none: he hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not: drunk many times a day, if not many days entirely drunk. We have very oft awaked him, as if to carry him to execution, and showed him a seeming warrant for it: it hath not moved him at all.

DUKE. More of him anon. There is written in your brow, provost, honesty and constancy: if I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but, in the boldness of my cunning, I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenced him. To make you understand this in a manifest effect, I crave but four days' respite; for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy.

154

PROV. Pray, sir, in what?

DUKE. In the delaying death.

PROV. Alack, how may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver

---

138 *desperately mortal*] either hopelessly involved in mortal sin, or likely to die hopeless and unrepentant.

148-149 *in the boldness . . . hazard*] confident in my sagacity, I will run the risk.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest. 160

DUKE. By the vow of mine order I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.

PROV. Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour.

DUKE. O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death: you know the course is common. If any thing fall to you upon this, more than thanks and good fortune, by the Saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life. 171

PROV. Pardon me, good father; it is against my oath.

DUKE. Were you sworn to the Duke, or to the Deputy?

PROV. To him, and to his substitutes.

DUKE. You will think you have made no offence, if the Duke avouch the justice of your dealing?

PROV. But what likelihood is in that? 177

DUKE. Not a resemblance, but a certainty. Yet since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the Duke: you know the

---

168 *bared*] shaved. Cf. *All's Well*, IV, i, 46: "the *baring* of my beard."

180 *attempt*] tempt. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, IV, i, 416, "of force I must *attempt* you further."

### SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

character, I doubt not; and the signet is not strange to you.

PROV. I know them both.

DUKE. The contents of this is the return of the Duke: you shall anon over-read it at your pleasure; where you shall find, within these two days he will be here. This is a thing that Angelo knows not; for he this very day receives letters of strange tenour; perchance of the Duke's death; perchance entering into some monastery; but, by chance, nothing of what is writ. Look, the unfolding star calls up the shepherd. Put not yourself into amazement how these things should be: all difficulties are but easy when they are known. Call your executioner, and off with Barnardine's head: I will give him a present shrift and advise him for a better place. Yet you are amazed; but this shall absolutely resolve you. Come away; it is almost clear dawn. [*Exeunt.* 198

### SCENE III—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE SAME

*Enter POMPEY*

POM. I am as well acquainted here as I was in our house of profession: one would think it were Mistress Overdone's own house, for here be many of her old cus-

---

191 *the unfolding star*] the morning star. Cf. Milton's *Comus*, 94-95 [of the evening star]: "The star that bids the *shepherd fold*, Now the top of heaven doth hold."

2 *house of profession*] a house professedly applied to immoral uses.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

tomers. First, here 's young Master Rash; he 's in for a commodity of brown paper and old ginger, nine-score and seventeen pounds; of which he made five marks, ready money: marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one Master Caper, at the suit of Master Three-pile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-coloured satin,<sup>10</sup> which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizzy, and young Master Deep-vow, and Master Copper-spur, and Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Forthlight the tilter, and brave Master Shooty the great traveller, and wild Half-can that stabbed Pots, and, I think, forty more; all great doers in our trade, and are now "for the Lord's sake."

---

5 *brown paper and old ginger*] worthless articles foisted by money-lenders as things of value on foolish borrowers.

7-8 *ginger . . . dead*] See note on *Merch. of Ven.*, III, i, 9: "As lying a gossip in that as ever knapped *ginger*."

10 *peaches him a beggar*] supplies the evidence that he is a beggar.

13 *rapier and dagger man*] the duellist who usually fought with both weapons.

15 *Shooty*] Thus the Second and later Folios. The First Folio reads *Shootie, i. e.*, shoe-tie. The reasonable suggestion that the reference is to Tom Coryate, who made his reputation by walking to Venice and back in the same pair of shoes in 1608, can only be adopted if we assume that the words were interpolated after the first production of the play in 1604.

17 "*for the Lord's sake*"] This was the common cry with which prisoners begged from behind the prison-bars of passers by.

SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

*Enter ABHORSON*

ABHOR. Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

POM. Master Barnardine! you must rise and be <sup>20</sup>  
hanged, Master Barnardine!

ABHOR. What, ho, Barnardine!

BAR. [*Within*] A pox o' your throats! Who makes  
that noise there? What are you?

POM. Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be  
so good, sir, to rise and be put to death.

BAR. [*Within*] Away, you rogue, away! I am sleepy.

ABHOR. Tell him he must awake, and that quickly too.

POM. Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are  
executed, and sleep afterwards. <sup>30</sup> X

ABHOR. Go in to him, and fetch him out.

POM. He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw  
rustle.

ABHOR. Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

POM. Very ready, sir.

*Enter BARNARDINE*

BAR. How now, Abhorson? what's the news with you?

ABHOR. Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into  
your prayers; for, look you, the warrant's come.

BAR. You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I  
am not fitted for 't. <sup>40</sup>

POM. O, the better, sir; for he that drinks all night,  
and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the  
sunder all the next day.

ABHOR. Look you, sir; here comes your ghostly  
father: do we jest now, think you?

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

*Enter DUKE disguised as before*

DUKE. Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you and pray with you.

BAR. Friar, not I: I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they<sup>50</sup> shall beat out my brains with billets: I will not consent to die this day, that 's certain.

DUKE. O, sir, you must: and therefore I beseech you Look forward on the journey you shall go.

BAR. I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

DUKE. But hear you.

BAR. Not a word: if you have any thing to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day. [*Exit.*

DUKE. Unfit to live or die: O gravel heart!<sup>60</sup>  
After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

[*Exeunt Abhorson and Pompey.*

*Enter PROVOST*

PROV. Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE. A creature unprepared, unmeet for death;  
And to transport him in the mind he is  
Were damnable.

PROV. Here in the prison, father,  
There died this morning of a cruel fever  
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,  
A man of Claudio's years; his beard and head  
Just of his colour. What if we do omit  
This reprobate till he were well inclined;

70

SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

And satisfy the Deputy with the visage  
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio?

DUKE. O, 't is an accident that heaven provides!  
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on  
Prefix'd by Angelo: see this be done,  
And sent according to command; whiles I  
Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.

PROV. This shall be done, good father, presently.  
But Barnardine must die this afternoon:  
And how shall we continue Claudio, 80  
To save me from the danger that might come  
If he were known alive?

DUKE. Let this be done.  
Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and Claudio:  
Ere twice the sun hath made his journal greeting  
To the under generation, you shall find  
Your safety manifested.

PROV. I am your free dependant.

DUKE. Quick, dispatch, and send the head to An-  
gelo. [Exit Provost.]

Now will I write letters to Angelo, —  
The provost, he shall bear them, — whose contents 90  
Shall witness to him I am near at home,

---

80 *continue*] keep.

84-85 *his journal greeting . . . generation*] The Folios here read *yond*  
(for *the under*) *generation*, which Rowe extended to *yonder generation*.  
Hanmer sensibly proposed *the under generation*, understanding that  
the words referred to the sun's daily greeting of the Antipodes. Cf.  
*Rich. II*, III, ii, 37-38: "the searching eye of heaven is hid, Behind  
the globe, that lights the *lower world*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

And that, by great injunctions, I am bound  
To enter publicly: him I 'll desire  
To meet me at the consecrated fount,  
A league below the city; and from thence,  
By cold gradation and well-balanced form,  
We shall proceed with Angelo.

*Re-enter PROVOST*

PROV. Here is the head; I 'll carry it myself.

DUKE. Convenient is it. Make a swift return;  
For I would commune with you of such things 100  
That want no ear but yours.

PROV. I 'll make all speed. [*Exit.*]

ISAB. [*Within*] Peace, ho, be here!

DUKE. The tongue of Isabel. She 's come to know  
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither:  
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,  
To make her heavenly comforts of despair,  
When it is least expected.

*Enter ISABELLA*

ISAB. Ho, by your leave!

DUKE. Good morning to you, fair and gracious  
daughter.

ISAB. The better, given me by so holy a man.  
Hath yet the Deputy sent my brother's pardon? 110

DUKE. He hath released him, Isabel, from the world:  
His head is off, and sent to Angelo.

---

106-107 *To . . . expected*] To cause her despair to give place to happiness  
when she least looked for it.



SCENE III MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

ISAB. Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE. It is no other: show your wisdom, daughter,  
In your close patience.

ISAB. O, I will to him and pluck out his eyes!

DUKE. You shall not be admitted to his sight.

ISAB. Unhappy Claudio! wretched Isabel!  
Injurious world! most damned Angelo!

DUKE. This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot; 120  
Forbear it therefore; give your cause to heaven.

Mark what I say, which you shall find

By every syllable a faithful verity:

The Duke comes home to-morrow;—nay, dry your eyes;

One of our covent, and his confessor,

Gives me this instance: already he hath carried

Notice to Escalus and Angelo;

Who do prepare to meet him at the gates,

There to give up their power. If you can, pace your  
wisdom

In that good path that I would wish it go; 130

And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,

Grace of the Duke, revenges to your heart,

And general honour.

ISAB. I am directed by you.

DUKE. This letter, then, to Friar Peter give;

'T is that he sent me of the Duke's return:

Say, by this token, I desire his company

---

125 *covent*] Thus the Folios: a variant of "convent," as in *Covent Garden*.

126 *instance*] assurance, intimation.

131 *bosom*] heart's desire.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

At Mariana's house to-night. Her cause and yours  
 I'll perfect him withal; and he shall bring you  
 Before the Duke; and to the head of Angelo  
 Accuse him home and home. For my poor self, 140  
 I am combined by a sacred vow,  
 And shall be absent. Wend you with this letter:  
 Command these fretting waters from your eyes  
 With a light heart; trust not my holy order,  
 If I pervert your course. — Who's here?

*Enter LUCIO*

LUCIO. Good even. Friar, where's the provost?

DUKE. Not within, sir. 147

LUCIO. O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to  
 see thine eyes so red: thou must be patient. I am fain  
 to dine and sup with water and bran; I dare not for my  
 head fill my belly; one fruitful meal would set me to 't.  
 But they say the Duke will be here to-morrow. By my  
 troth, Isabel, I loved thy brother: if the old fantastical  
 Duke of dark corners had been at home, he had lived.

*[Exit Isabella.]*

DUKE. Sir, the Duke is marvellous little beholding to  
 your reports; but the best is, he lives not in them.

LUCIO. Friar, thou knowest not the Duke so well as  
 I do: he's a better woodman than thou takest him for.

141 *combined*] bound, pledged. Cf. III, i, 216, *supra*: “*combinat* husband” and note.

158 *woodman*] Used colloquially of a hunter after female game, or women. Cf. *M. Wives*, V, v, 25: “Am I a *woodman*, ha?” Also see Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Chances*, I, viii, “I see you are a *woodman* and can choose your deer tho' it be i' the dark.”

SCENE IV MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. Well, you 'll answer this one day. Fare ye well.

LUCIO. Nay, tarry; I 'll go along with thee: I can tell thee pretty tales of the Duke.

DUKE. You have told me too many of him already, sir, if they be true; if not true, none were enough.

LUCIO. I was once before him for getting a wench with child.

DUKE. Did you such a thing?

LUCIO. Yes, marry, did I: but I was fain to forswear it; they would else have married me to the rotten medlar.

DUKE. Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest you well. 170

LUCIO. By my troth, I 'll go with thee to the lane's end: if bawdy talk offend you, we 'll have very little of it. Nay, friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV—A ROOM IN ANGELO'S HOUSE

*Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS*

ESCAL. Every letter he hath writ hath disvouched other.

ANG. In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness: pray heaven his wisdom be not tainted! And why meet him at the gates, and redeliver our authorities there?

---

*5 redeliver*] This is Capell's emendation of the *reliver* of the First Folio, and *deliver* of the Second and later Folios. Shakespeare possibly had in mind the French verb "relivrer," which Cotgrave interprets as "redeliver."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

ESCAL. I guess not.

ANG. And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his entering, that if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?

ESCAL. He shows his reason for that: to have a dispatch of complaints, and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which shall then have no power to stand against us.

ANG. Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaimed betimes i' the morn; I'll call you at your house: give notice to such men of sort and suit as are to meet him.

ESCAL. I shall, sir. Fare you well.

ANG. Good night. [Exit Escalus.]

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant,

And dull to all proceedings. A deflower'd maid!  
And by an eminent body that enforced 20  
The law against it! But that her tender shame  
Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,  
How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no;  
For my authority bears of a credent bulk,  
That no particular scandal once can touch  
But it confounds the breather. He should have lived,  
Save that this riotous youth, with dangerous sense,  
Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge,  
By so receiving a dishonour'd life

---

15 *sort and suit*] men of rank, owing suit and service to their feudal lord.

23 *dares her no*] Thus the Folios. The language, though crabbed, is quite plain. Reason warns her not to employ her tongue.

24 *bears of a credent*] supports such great weight of credit.

SCENE V MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had  
lived! 30

Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,  
Nothing goes right: we would, and we would not. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V—FIELDS WITHOUT THE TOWN

*Enter DUKE in his own habit, and FRIAR PETER*

DUKE. These letters at fit time deliver me:  
[*Giving letters.*]

The provost knows our purpose and our plot.  
The matter being afoot, keep your instruction,  
And hold you ever to our special drift;  
Though sometimes you do blench from this to that,  
As cause doth minister. Go call at Flavius' house,  
And tell him where I stay: give the like notice  
To Valentius, Rowland, and to Crassus,  
And bid them bring the trumpets to the gate;  
But send me Flavius first.

FRI. P. It shall be speeded well. [*Exit.* 10

*Enter VARRIUS*

DUKE. I thank thee, Varrius; thou hast made good  
haste:  
Come, we will walk. There 's other of our friends  
Will greet us here anon, my gentle Varrius. [*Exeunt.*]

---

5 *blench*] "Blench," which commonly means "start in fright," here has  
the weaker significance of "diverge," "move away."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT IV

---

SCENE VI—STREET NEAR THE CITY-GATE

*Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA*

ISAB. To speak so indirectly I am loath:  
I would say the truth; but to accuse him so,  
That is your part: yet I am advised to do it;  
He says, to veil full purpose.

MARI. Be ruled by him.

ISAB. Besides, he tells me that, if peradventure  
He speak against me on the adverse side,  
I should not think it strange; for 't is a physic  
That 's bitter to sweet end.

MARI. I would Friar Peter —

ISAB. O, peace! the friar is come.

*Enter FRIAR PETER*

FRI. P. Come, I have found you out a stand most fit,<sup>10</sup>  
Where you may have such vantage on the Duke,  
He shall not pass you. Twice have the trumpets  
sounded;  
The generous and gravest citizens  
Have hent the gates, and very near upon  
The Duke is entering: therefore, hence, away! [*Exeunt.*]

---

<sup>4</sup> *to veil full*] Malone's ingenious emendation of *to vaile full* of the Folios. Theobald adopted the reading *t' availful*, which he interpreted "to profitable purpose."

<sup>13-14</sup> *The generous . . . gates*] The high-born and most influential citizens have seized or reached the gates.



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I  
*THE CITY-GATE*

MARIANA *veiled*, ISABELLA, and FRIAR PETER, *at their stand.*  
*Enter* DUKE, VARRIUS, LORDS, ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO, PRO-  
VOST, OFFICERS, and CITIZENS, *at several doors*

DUKE



Y VERY WORTHY  
cousin, fairly met!  
Our old and faithful friend, we  
are glad to see you.

ANG. } Happy return be to  
ESCAL. } your royal Grace!

DUKE. Many and hearty  
thankings to you both.

We have made inquiry of you;  
and we hear  
Such goodness of your justice,  
that our soul  
Cannot but yield you forth to  
public thanks,

Forerunning more requital.

ANG. You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE. O, your desert speaks loud; and I should  
wrong it,

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

To lock it in the wards of covert bosom, 10  
 When it deserves, with characters of brass,  
 A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time  
 And rasure of oblivion. Give me your hand,  
 And let the subject see, to make them know  
 That outward courtesies would fain proclaim  
 Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus;  
 You must walk by us on our other hand:  
 And good supporters are you.

FRIAR PETER *and* ISABELLA *come forward*

FRI. P. Now is your time: speak loud, and kneel be-  
 fore him.

ISAB. Justice, O royal Duke! Vail your regard 20  
 Upon a wrong'd, I would fain have said, a maid!  
 O worthy prince, dishonour not your eye  
 By throwing it on any other object  
 Till you have heard me in my true complaint,  
 And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!

DUKE. Relate your wrongs; in what? by whom? be  
 brief.

Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice:  
 Reveal yourself to him.

ISAB. O worthy Duke,  
 You bid me seek redemption of the devil:  
 Hear me yourself; for that which I must speak 30  
 Must either punish me, not being believed,

16 *Favours . . . within*] Marks of recognition that are in my heart.

20 *Vail your regard*] Lower your eyes. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 956, "She  
*vail'd her eyelids."*



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Or wring redress from you. Hear me, O hear me,  
here!

ANG. My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm:  
She hath been a suitor to me for her brother  
Cut off by course of justice, —

ISAB. By course of justice!

ANG. And she will speak most bitterly and strange.

ISAB. Most strange, but yet most truly, will I  
speak:

That Angelo's forsworn; is it not strange?

That Angelo's a murderer; is't not strange?

That Angelo is an adulterous thief,

40

An hypocrite, a virgin-violator;

Is it not strange and strange?

DUKE. Nay, it is ten times strange.

ISAB. It is not truer he is Angelo

Than this is all as true as it is strange:

Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth

To the end of reckoning.

DUKE. Away with her! — Poor soul,  
She speaks this in the infirmity of sense.

ISAB. O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believest  
There is another comfort than this world,

That thou neglect me not, with that opinion

50

That I am touch'd with madness! Make not impossible

That which but seems unlike: 't is not impossible

But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,

May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute

As Angelo; even so may Angelo,

---

54 *shy . . . absolute*] modestly reserved . . . perfect.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

---

In all his dressings, characts, titles, forms,  
Be an arch-villain; believe it, royal prince:  
If he be less, he 's nothing; but he 's more,  
Had I more name for badness.

DUKE. By mine honesty,  
If she be mad, — as I believe no other, — 60  
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,  
Such a dependency of thing on thing,  
As e'er I heard in madness.

ISAB. O gracious Duke,  
Harp not on that; nor do not banish reason  
For inequality; but let your reason serve  
To make the truth appear where it seems hid,  
And hide the false seems true.

DUKE. Many that are not mad  
Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you  
say?

ISAB. I am the sister of one Claudio,  
Condemn'd upon the act of fornication 70  
To lose his head; condemn'd by Angelo:  
I, in probation of a sisterhood,  
Was sent to by my brother; one Lucio  
As then the messenger, —

LUCIO. That 's I, an 't like your Grace:  
I came to her from Claudio, and desired her

---

56 *dressings, characts*] habiliments, badges of office. "Characts" is no uncommon abbreviation of "characters."

65 *For inequality*] Because my speech is unequal or inconsistent.

67 *hide the false seems true*] seclude the falsehood which now seems truth.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

To try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo  
For her poor brother's pardon.

ISAB. That's he indeed.

DUKE. You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO. No, my good lord;  
Nor wish'd to hold my peace.

DUKE. I wish you now, then;  
Pray you, take note of it: and when you have 80  
A business for yourself, pray heaven you then  
Be perfect.

LUCIO. I warrant your honour.

DUKE. The warrant's for yourself; take heed to't.

ISAB. This gentleman told somewhat of my tale, —

LUCIO. Right.

DUKE. It may be right; but you are i' the wrong  
To speak before your time. Proceed.

ISAB. I went  
To this pernicious caitiff Deputy, —

DUKE. That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISAB. Pardon it; 90  
The phrase is to the matter.

DUKE. Mended again. The matter; — proceed.

ISAB. In brief, — to set the needless process by,  
How I persuaded, how I pray'd, and kneel'd,  
How he refell'd me, and how I replied, —  
For this was of much length, — the vile conclusion  
I now begin with grief and shame to utter:  
He would not, but by gift of my chaste body  
To his concupiscible intemperate lust,

---

94 *refell'd*] refuted. Cf. "confutes," line 100, *infra*.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

Release my brother; and, after much debatement,  
 My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour, 100  
 And I did yield to him: but the next morn betimes,  
 His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant  
 For my poor brother's head.

DUKE. This is most likely!

ISAB. O, that it were as like as it is true!

DUKE. By heaven, fond wretch, thou know'st not  
 what thou speak'st,  
 Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour  
 In hateful practice. First, his integrity  
 Stands without blemish. Next, it imports no reason  
 That with such vehemency he should pursue  
 Faults proper to himself: if he had so offended, 110  
 He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself,  
 And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on:  
 Confess the truth, and say by whose advice  
 Thou camest here to complain.

ISAB. And is this all?  
 Then, O you blessed ministers above,  
 Keep me in patience, and with ripen'd time  
 Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up  
 In countenance! — Heaven shield your Grace from woe,  
 As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbelieved go!

100 *My sisterly . . . confutes*] My sisterly pity overthrows.

108–110 *it imports . . . to himself*] there is no cause in reason why he should attack with such vehemence faults inherent in himself.

111 *weigh'd*] See note on II, ii, 126, *supra*.

117–118 *wrapt up . . . In countenance*] concealed owing to the countenance or partiality extended to the offender. Cf. line 166, *infra*: “In this I'll be *impartial*.”

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

DUKE. I know you 'ld fain be gone. — An officer! 120  
 To prison with her! — Shall we thus permit  
 A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall  
 On him so near us? This needs must be a practice.  
 Who knew of your intent and coming hither?

ISAB. One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

DUKE. A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that  
 Lodowick?

LUCIO. My lord, I know him; 't is a meddling friar;  
 I do not like the man: had he been lay, my lord,  
 For certain words he spake against your Grace  
 In your retirement, I had swung him soundly. 130

DUKE. Words against me! this 's a good friar, belike!  
 And to set on this wretched woman here  
 Against our substitute! Let this friar be found.

LUCIO. But yesternight, my lord, she and that friar,  
 I saw them at the prison: a saucy friar,  
 A very scurvy fellow.

FRI. P. Blessed be your royal Grace!  
 I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard  
 Your royal ear abused. First, hath this woman  
 Most wrongfully accused your substitute, 140  
 Who is as free from touch or soil with her  
 As she from one ungot.

DUKE. We did believe no less.  
 Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

FRI. P. I know him for a man divine and holy;  
 Not scurvy, nor a temporary meddler,  
 As he 's reported by this gentleman;

145 *a temporary meddler*] one who meddles in temporal or secular affairs.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

And, on my trust, a man that never yet  
Did, as he vouches, misreport your Grace.

LUCIO. My lord, most villanously; believe it.

FRI. P. Well, he in time may come to clear himself; 150  
But at this instant he is sick, my lord,  
Of a strange fever. Upon his mere request, —  
Being come to knowledge that there was complaint  
Intended 'gainst Lord Angelo, — came I hither,  
To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know  
Is true and false; and what he with his oath  
And all probation will make up full clear,  
Whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman,  
To justify this worthy nobleman, 160  
So vulgarly and personally accused,  
Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,  
Till she herself confess it.

DUKE. Good friar, let's hear it.

*[Isabella is carried off guarded; and Mariana  
comes forward.]*

Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo? —  
O heaven, the vanity of wretched fools! —  
Give us some seats. Come, cousin Angelo;  
In this I'll be impartial; be you judge  
Of your own cause. Is this the witness, friar?  
First, let her show her face, and after speak.

MARI. Pardon, my lord; I will not show my face  
Until my husband bid me. 170

DUKE. What, are you married?

158 *convented*] summoned. Cf. *Cor.*, II, ii, 58–59: “We are *convented*  
Upon a pleasant treaty.”

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

MARI. No, my lord.

DUKE. Are you a maid?

MARI. No, my lord.

DUKE. A widow, then?

MARI. Neither, my lord.

DUKE. Why, you are nothing, then: — neither maid, widow, nor wife?

LUCIO. My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor wife. 180

DUKE. Silence that fellow: I would he had some cause To prattle for himself.

LUCIO. Well, my lord.

MARI. My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married; And I confess, besides, I am no maid: I have known my husband; yet my husband Knows not that ever he knew me.

LUCIO. He was drunk, then, my lord: it can be no better.

DUKE. For the benefit of silence, would thou wert so too!

LUCIO. Well, my lord. 190

DUKE. This is no witness for Lord Angelo.

MARI. Now I come to 't, my lord: She that accuses him of fornication, In self-same manner doth accuse my husband; And charges him, my lord, with such a time When I 'll depose I had him in mine arms With all the effect of love.

ANG. Charges she moe than me?

MARI. Not that I know.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

DUKE. No? you say your husband.

MARI. Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo, 200  
Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,  
But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.

ANG. This is a strange abuse. Let's see thy face.

MARI. My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

[Unveiling.]

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,  
Which once thou swore'st was worth the looking on;  
This is the hand which, with a vow'd contract,  
Was fast belock'd in thine; this is the body  
That took away the match from Isabel, 210  
And did supply thee at thy garden-house  
In her imagined person.

DUKE. Know you, this woman?

LUCIO. Carnally, she says.

DUKE. Sirrah, no more!

LUCIO. Enough, my lord.

ANG. My lord, I must confess I know this woman:  
And five years since there was some speech of marriage  
Betwixt myself and her; which was broke off,  
Partly for that her promised proportions  
Came short of composition; but in chief,  
For that her reputation was disvalued  
In levity: since which time of five years 220

---

217-218 *her promised . . . composition*] her promised portion or dowry  
fell short of the agreement. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, iii, 3: "I have received  
my *proportion*."

219-220 *her reputation . . . levity*] her good name was depreciated owing  
to her loose behaviour.



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her,  
Upon my faith and honour.

MARI. Noble prince,  
As there comes light from heaven and words from  
breath,  
As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,  
I am affianced this man's wife as strongly  
As words could make up vows: and, my good lord,  
But Tuesday night last gone in 's garden-house  
He knew me as a wife. As this is true,  
Let me in safety raise me from my knees;  
Or else for ever be confixed here, 230  
A marble monument!

ANG. I did but smile till now:  
Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice;  
My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive  
These poor informal women are no more  
But instruments of some more mightier member  
That sets them on: let me have way, my lord,  
To find this practice out.

DUKE. Ay, with my heart;  
And punish them to your height of pleasure.  
Thou foolish friar; and thou pernicious woman,  
Compact with her that 's gone, think'st thou thy oaths, 240  
Though they would swear down each particular saint,  
Were testimonies against his worth and credit,

---

234 *informal*] crazy, irrational; an uncommon usage, though "formal" is frequently used by Shakespeare in the sense of "rational." Cf. *Ant. and Cleop.*, II, v, 41: "Thou shouldst come like a Fury . . . Not like a *formal* man."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

That 's seal'd in approbation? You, Lord Escalus,  
 Sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains  
 To find out this abuse, whence 't is derived.  
 There is another friar that set them on;  
 Let him be sent for.

FRI. P. Would he were here, my lord! for he, indeed,  
 Hath set the women on to this complaint:  
 Your provost knows the place where he abides, 250  
 And he may fetch him.

DUKE. Go, do it instantly. [*Exit Provost.*]  
 And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,  
 Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,  
 Do with your injuries as seems you best,  
 In any chastisement: I for a while will leave you;  
 But stir not you till you have well determined  
 Upon these slanderers.

ESCAL. My lord, we 'll do it throughly. [*Exit Duke.*]  
 Signior Lucio, did not you say you knew that Friar  
 Lodowick to be a dishonest person? 260

LUCIO. "Cucullus non facit monachum:" honest in  
 nothing but in his clothes; and one that hath spoke most  
 villanous speeches of the Duke.

ESCAL. We shall entreat you to abide here till he  
 come, and enforce them against him: we shall find this  
 friar a notable fellow.

243 *seal'd in approbation*] ratified or certified by proof. The seal is the  
 final mark of legal validity.

253 *hear . . . forth*] hear out, hear to the end.

261 "*Cucullus . . . monachum*"] This familiar Latin proverb has been  
 already quoted by Shakespeare in *Tw. Night*, I, v, 50. It is translated  
 in *Hen. VIII*, III, i, 23: "all hoods make not monks."

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

LUCIO. As any in Vienna, on my word.

ESCAL. Call that same Isabel here once again: I would speak with her. [*Exit an Attendant.*] Pray you, my lord, give me leave to question; you shall see how I'll handle her. 271

LUCIO. Not better than he, by her own report.

ESCAL. Say you?

LUCIO. Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess: perchance, publicly, she'll be ashamed.

ESCAL. I will go darkly to work with her.

LUCIO. That's the way; for women are light at midnight.

*Re-enter OFFICERS with ISABELLA; and PROVOST  
with the DUKE in his friar's habit*

ESCAL. Come on, mistress: here's a gentlewoman denies all that you have said. 280

LUCIO. My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of; here with the provost.

ESCAL. In very good time: speak not you to him till we call upon you.

LUCIO. Mum.

ESCAL. Come, sir: did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo? they have confessed you did.

DUKE. 'T is false.

ESCAL. How! know you where you are?

DUKE. Respect to your great place! and let the devil

---

278 *light at midnight*] A favourite quibble with Shakespeare. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, V, i, 129: "Let me give *light*, but let me not be *light*."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

Be sometime honour'd for his burning throne! 291  
Where is the Duke? 't is he should hear me speak.

ESCAL. The Duke 's in us; and we will hear you  
speak:

Look you speak justly.

DUKE. Boldly, at least. But, O, poor souls,  
Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox?  
Good night to your redress! Is the Duke gone?  
Then is your cause gone too. The Duke 's un-  
just,

Thus to retort your manifest appeal,  
And put your trial in the villain's mouth 300  
Which here you come to accuse.

LUCIO. This is the rascal; this is he I spoke of.

ESCAL. Why, thou unreverend and unhallow'd  
friar,

Is 't not enough thou hast suborn'd these women  
To accuse this worthy man, but, in foul mouth,  
And in the witness of his proper ear,  
To call him villain? and then to glance from him  
To the Duke himself, to tax him with injustice?  
Take him hence; to the rack with him! We 'll touse  
you

Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose. 310  
What, "unjust"!

DUKE. Be not so hot; the Duke  
Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he

---

299 *retort . . . appeal*] refer back to Angelo your deliberate appeal to  
the Duke against Angelo.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Dare rack his own: his subject am I not,  
Nor here provincial. My business in this state  
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,  
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble  
Till it o'er-run the stew; laws for all faults,  
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes  
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,  
As much in mock as mark. 320

ESCAL. Slander to the state! Away with him to prison!

ANG. What can you vouch against him, Signior Lucio?  
Is this the man that you did tell us of?

LUCIO. 'Tis he, my lord. Come hither, goodman  
baldpate: do you know me?

DUKE. I remember you, sir, by the sound of your  
voice: I met you at the prison, in the absence of the  
Duke.

LUCIO. O, did you so? And do you remember what  
you said of the Duke?

DUKE. Most notably, sir. 330

LUCIO. Do you so, sir? And was the Duke a flesh-  
monger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him  
to be?

---

313-314 *his subject . . . provincial*] I am not the Duke's subject, nor  
amenable to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authorities of the  
province or district.

317 *stew*] In this culinary metaphor "stew" seems used for the "stew-  
pan," or contents of a saucepan, with a quibbling allusion to "stews,"  
*i. e.*, brothels.

319 *the forfeits in a barber's shop*] lists of petty fines or forfeits, often of  
farical character, which hung on the walls of a barber's shop. They  
were playfully intended to keep order among the customers.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

DUKE. You must, sir, change persons with me, ere you make that my report: you, indeed, spoke so of him; and much more, much worse.

LUCIO. O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the nose for thy speeches?

DUKE. I protest I love the Duke as I love myself.

ANG. Hark, how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses! 341

ESCAL. Such a fellow is not to be talked withal. Away with him to prison! Where is the provost? Away with him to prison! lay bolts enough upon him: let him speak no more. Away with those giglets too, and with the other confederate companion!

DUKE. [*To the Provost*] Stay, sir; stay awhile.

ANG. What, resists he? Help him, Lucio.

LUCIO. Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir; foh, sir! Why, you bald-pated, lying rascal, you must be hooded, must you? Show your knave's visage, with a pox to you! show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged an hour! Will 't not off? 353

[*Pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers the Duke.*]

340 *close*] Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, III, ii, 47: "an 't were dark, you 'ld close [*i. e.*, come to terms] sooner." The suggested change to *gloze* is quite needless.

345 *giglets*] Cf. 1 *Hen. VI*, IV, vii, 41: "a *giglot* [*i. e.*, wanton] wench."

352 *sheep-biting face . . . hour!*] Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, v, 5: "rascally *sheep-biter*" and note. A "sheep-biter" is a sneaking cur that worries sheep. "An hour" seems here an emphatic synonym for "a while." Cf. *As You Like It*, I, ii, 31, "be naught awhile," and Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, II, i: "be cursed awhile."

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. Thou art the first knave that e'er madest a Duke.

First, provost, let me bail these gentle three.

[*To Lucio*] Sneak not away, sir; for the friar and you Must have a word anon. Lay hold on him.

LUCIO. This may prove worse than hanging.

DUKE. [*To Escalus*] What you have spoke I pardon: sit you down:

We'll borrow place of him. [*To Angelo*] Sir, by your leave.

Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence, 361  
That yet can do thee office? If thou hast,  
Rely upon it till my tale be heard,  
And hold no longer out.

ANG. O my dread lord,  
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,  
To think I can be undiscernible,  
When I perceive your Grace, like power divine,  
Hath look'd upon my passes. Then, good prince,  
No longer session hold upon my shame,  
But let my trial be mine own confession: 370  
Immediate sentence then, and sequent death,  
Is all the grace I beg.

DUKE. Come hither, Mariana.

Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?

ANG. I was, my lord.

DUKE. Go take her hence, and marry her instantly.

---

362 *can do thee office?*] can do thee service?

368 *passes*] The word here is almost equivalent to "trespass." But there is an allusion to the passes (*i. e.*, tricks) of jugglery.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

---

Do you the office, friar; which consummate,  
Return him here again. Go with him, provost.

[*Exeunt Angelo, Mariana, Friar Peter, and Provost.*]

ESCAL. My lord, I am more amazed at his dishonour  
Than at the strangeness of it.

DUKE. Come hither, Isabel. 380  
Your friar is now your prince: as I was then  
Advertising and holy to your business,  
Not changing heart with habit, I am still  
Attorney'd at your service.

ISAB. O, give me pardon,  
That I, your vassal, have employ'd and pain'd  
Your unknown sovereignty!

DUKE. You are pardon'd, Isabel:  
And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.  
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart;  
And you may marvel why I obscured myself,  
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather 390  
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power  
Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,  
It was the swift celerity of his death,  
Which I did think with slower foot came on,  
That brain'd my purpose. But, peace be with him!  
That life is better life, past fearing death,

---

381 *Advertising . . . business*] Counselling, and faithful to your affairs.

384 *employ'd and pain'd*] given trouble to, given cause for labour. "Painful" is frequently found in the sense of "laborious."

390 *rash remonstrance*] hasty demonstration, manifestation, display.

394 *brain'd my purpose*] knocked my desire on the head. Cf. *Tempest*, III, ii, 84: "thou mayst *brain* him."



SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Than that which lives to fear: make it your comfort,  
So happy is your brother.

ISAB. I do, my lord.

*Re-enter ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER, and PROVOST*

DUKE. For this new-married man, approaching here,  
Whose salt imagination yet hath wrong'd  
Your well-defended honour, you must pardon 400  
For Mariana's sake: but as he adjudged your brother,—  
Being criminal, in double violation  
Of sacred chastity, and of promise-breach  
Thereon dependent, for your brother's life, —  
The very mercy of the law cries out  
Most audible, even from his proper tongue,  
“An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!”  
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;  
Like doth quit like, and MEASURE still FOR MEASURE.  
Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested; 410  
Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.  
We do condemn thee to the very block

---

399 *salt imagination*] Cf. *Othello*, II, i, 237: “His *salt* [*i. e.*, lustful] and most hidden loose affection.”

402-404 *Being criminal . . . life*] The language is here irregular. The meaning is Angelo was guilty of two crimes: first, of violating sacred chastity, and then of breaking the promise given on condition of that violation to preserve the brother's life.

409 *Measure . . . for Measure*] A proverbial expression equivalent to “tit for tat.” Cf. 3 *Hen. VI*, II, vi, 55: “*Measure for measure* must be answered.”

411 *Which . . . vantage*] The denial of which is no advantage to thee. Cf. *Wint. Tale*, III, ii, 84: “Which to deny concerns more than avails.”

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste.  
Away with him!

MARI. O my most gracious lord,  
I hope you will not mock me with a husband.

DUKE. It is your husband mock'd you with a husband.  
Consenting to the safeguard of your honour,  
I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,  
For that he knew you, might reproach your life,  
And choke your good to come: for his possessions, 420  
Although by confiscation they are ours,  
We do instate and widow you withal,  
To buy you a better husband.

MAR. O my dear lord,  
I crave no other, nor no better man.

DUKE. Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARI. Gentle my liege, — [Kneeling.

DUKE. You do but lose your labour.  
Away with him to death! [To Lucio] Now, sir, to you.

MARI. O my good lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part;  
Lend me your knees, and all my life to come  
I'll lend you all my life to do you service. 430

DUKE. Against all sense you do importune her:  
Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,

421 *confiscation*] Thus the Second and later Folios. The First Folio reads *confutation*, which has been explained to mean "conviction," "confutare" being found in the sense of "to convict" in post-classical authors. No example of this usage of "confutation" has been discovered.

422 *instate and widow*] confer as the dower or jointure of a widow.

432 *in mercy of this fact*] by way of pardoning this deed or crime. For "fact" in this sense cf. IV, ii, 129, *supra*.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Her brother's ghost his paved bed would break,  
And take her hence in horror.

MARI. Isabel,  
Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;  
Hold up your hands, say nothing, I'll speak all.  
They say, best men are moulded out of faults;  
And, for the most, become much more the better  
For being a little bad: so may my husband.  
O Isabel, will you not lend a knee? 440

DUKE. He dies for Claudio's death.

ISAB. Most bounteous sir, [*Kneeling.*]  
Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,  
As if my brother lived: I partly think  
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,  
Till he did look on me: since it is so,  
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,  
In that he did the thing for which he died:  
For Angelo,  
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent;  
And must be buried but as an intent 450  
That perish'd by the way: thoughts are no subjects;  
Intents, but merely thoughts.

MARI. Merely, my lord.

DUKE. Your suit's unprofitable; stand up, I say.  
I have bethought me of another fault.  
Provost, how came it Claudio was beheaded  
At an unusual hour?

PROV. It was commanded so.

449 *His act . . . intent*] Cf. *Macb.*, IV, i, 145-146. "The flighty purpose  
never is o'ertook Unless the deed go with it."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

---

DUKE. Had you a special warrant for the deed?

PROV. No, my good lord; it was by private message.

DUKE. For which I do discharge you of your office:  
Give up your keys.

PROV. Pardon me, noble lord: 460

I thought it was a fault, but knew it not;

Yet did repent me, after more advice:

For testimony whereof, one in the prison,

That should by private order else have died,

I have reserved alive.

DUKE. What 's he?

PROV. His name is Barnardine.

DUKE. I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.

Go fetch him hither; let me look upon him. [*Exit Provost.*]

ESCAL. I am sorry, one so learned and so wise

As you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd,

Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood, 470

And lack of temper'd judgement afterward.

ANG. I am sorry that such sorrow I procure:

And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart,

That I crave death more willingly than mercy;

'T is my deserving, and I do entreat it.

*Re-enter PROVOST, with BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO muffled,  
and JULIET*

DUKE. Which is that Barnardine?

PROV. This, my lord.

DUKE. There was a friar told me of this man.

---

462 *after more advice*] on further consideration.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,  
 That apprehends no further than this world,  
 And squarest thy life according. Thou 'rt condemn'd: 480  
 But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all;  
 And pray thee take this mercy to provide  
 For better times to come. Friar, advise him;  
 I leave him to your hand. What muffled fellow 's  
 that?

PROV. This is another prisoner that I saved,  
 Who should have died when Claudio lost his head;  
 As like almost to Claudio as himself. [*Unmuffles Claudio.*]

DUKE. [*To Isabella*] If he be like your brother, for his  
 sake

Is he pardon'd; and, for your lovely sake,  
 Give me your hand, and say you will be mine, 490  
 He is my brother too: but fitter time for that.  
 By this Lord Angelo perceives he 's safe;  
 Methinks I see a quickening in his eye.  
 Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well:  
 Look that you love your wife; her worth worth yours.  
 I find an apt remission in myself;  
 And yet here 's one in place I cannot pardon.

---

481 *But . . . all*] But for those faults punishable on earth, cognizable by temporal power, I forgive them all.

490-491 *Give me . . . brother too*] These lines are somewhat elliptical. The Duke seems to mean that provided Isabella give him her hand, Claudio will then be his brother too. Isabella expresses no emotion by word of mouth on finding Claudio alive. Much is here left to be supplied by the gesture of the actors.

494 *your evil quits you well*] your ill-doing lets you off easily.

496 *an apt remission*] an inclination to pardon.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE ACT V

[*To Lucio*] You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a coward,  
 One all of luxury, an ass, a madman;  
 Wherein have I so deserved of you, 500  
 That you extol me thus?

LUCIO. 'Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to  
 the trick. If you will hang me for it, you may; but I  
 had rather it would please you I might be whipt.

DUKE. Whipt first, sir, and hang'd after.  
 Proclaim it, provost, round about the city,  
 If any woman wrong'd by this lewd fellow, —  
 As I have heard him swear himself there 's one  
 Whom he begot with child, let her appear,  
 And he shall marry her: the nuptial finish'd, 510  
 Let him be whipt and hang'd.

LUCIO. I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a  
 whore. Your highness said even now, I made you a  
 Duke: good my lord, do not recompense me in making  
 me a cuckold.

DUKE. Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her.  
 Thy slanders I forgive; and therewithal  
 Remit thy other forfeits. — Take him to prison;  
 And see our pleasure herein executed.

LUCIO. Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to  
 death, whipping, and hanging. 521

---

502-503 *according to the trick*] according to sportive custom, thoughtlessly,  
 a mere "façon de parler."

518 *forfeits*] punishments, penalties.

520 *pressing to death*] This was the cruel punishment, "peine et dure,"  
 dealt out, according to English law, to persons accused of felony who  
 refused to plead.

SCENE I MEASURE FOR MEASURE

---

DUKE. Slandering a prince deserves it.

[*Exeunt Officers with Lucio.*]

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.

Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo:

I have confess'd her, and I know her virtue.

Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness:

There's more behind that is more grate.

Thanks, provost, for thy care and secrecy:

We shall employ thee in a worthier place.

Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home

530

The head of Ragozine for Claudio's:

The offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,

I have a motion much imports your good;

Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,

What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show

What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know.

[*Exeunt.*]

---

527 *more grate*] more to be rejoiced at, more worthy of congratulation.

























